

LEVEL 999の村人

THE VILLAGERS OF
LEVEL 999

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LV999 Villager

- Volume 1 -

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– SYNOPSIS –

In this world, the concept of 『Level』 exists.

Other than those who are living as a monster slayer, at the most, ordinary peoples' 『Level』 is between 1 to 5.

Because of that, those who work as monster slayers are special people, bestowed by the Gods a special 『Job』 .

There are eight special 『Jobs』 , which have battle ability. 【Warrior】 , 【Monk】 , 【Priest】 , 【Wizard】 , 【Thief】 , 【Merchant】 , 【Hunter】 , and 【Shaman】 .

There are also three special roles that differentiate from the eight battle classes. 【Nobility】 , 【Hero】 , and 【Magi】 .

However, within the large population only a few earned those blessings. At most, all are 【Villagers】 , which is the lowest and weakest, tasked with daily duties.

A 【Villager】 doesn't have the ability to fight; trying to defeat a monster is suicide.

One day, a two years old child noticed something.

If you defeat a monster, you can be rich.

- Another Synopsis -

He lost his father to monsters thus he wanted to eradicate all monsters
He lost his mother to Humans thus he wanted to destroy the world
In his pursuit of destruction of the world he had discovered the truth
Now his journey begins anew to beat the ones behind the world system
after helping a little girl, the demon king daughter.



PROLOGUE

“Today’s earnings is...800 Silver? I wonder if this is a strange amount around here?”

Kagami muttered while inside the forest outskirts of the town, holding a bag of gold the size of two clenched fists.

At the same time, he noticed that he had been fighting monsters until dusk without eating a meal. He decided to take a break, dropping his sword near a tree and sitting down with his back against the stump.

Although he felt tired, when he imagined how he would spend the money he had earned, his heart nearly burst with joy.

Using the money he had saved until now, he could hire an exclusive housemaid or manage a casino. He could also become an entertainer, or something more extravagant. Ordinary people would end up having to use their money for emergencies and wouldn’t be able to save up such a dangerous sum of money.

Kagami Kouji. He was not from an amazing household; his parents had run a rather ordinary tailor shop and had passed away when he was young, leaving behind a poor orphan.

In the hands of this youth now was...800 Silver. The amount was about half of what one would make as a tailor in a year, and he had obtained it in just one day. He sat on top of the stump, holding the bag of gold coins in confusion.

Of course, he didn’t own just the 800 Silver in his hands. He had managed to amass 5480 Gold, and in this world, where it was said that an ordinary person would use an average of 50 Gold in their lifetime, he possessed a massive fortune.

If Kagami, a boy who had come from a normal tailor shop, said that he was a rich person, one could only say “It is a life worth living.” (Xant: aka jealousy)

Kagami had noticed that when you defeated the monsters living in this world, you were able to obtain money. The world had expanded with the birth of the concept

“Status”, and monsters were said to have spawned at the same time. Although the reason for this was unknown, this situation was seen as normal.

You obtain money from defeating monster, and if the city issues a specific monster subjugation request, you can get even more as a bonus.

This was something Kagami had realized when he was two years old. He had, by chance, met a few of the weakest and most famous monsters, Green Slimes, that had entered the village.

Kagami had known that monsters were a dangerous existence and had earnestly thrown sticks and stones that he picked up from the ground around him. This way, without directly fighting them, he defeated the Green Slimes uninjured.

At the same time he obtained 80 Bronze, one of the currencies of this world.

Gold, Silver, and Bronze. 1 Gold was worth 1000 Silver, and 1 Silver was worth 1000 Bronze.

80 Bronze was the amount that Kagami received from his parents once a week, and was enough to buy roughly two pieces of candy for him to eat.

Obviously, this was a not lot of money. However, even though the candy was cheap, it was the food that Kagami valued the most, so the 80 Bronze that could buy him two pieces was seen as a large amount.

This caused Kagami to think that earning money was “easy-peasy.”

However, earning money from fighting monsters was equal to courting death.

“Papaaaaaa!”

“My...Sonnnnnnn!”

In fact, there were lots of people who got killed by monsters.

The people who were killed by Green Slimes, which were said to be the weakest, were probably the most numerous.

In fact, Kagami had just passed by a parent and a child who looked like they would be killed by Green Slimes.

Although Kagami had, from the beginning, defeated them by throwing things, if he had hit them with his bare hands he would have certainly been killed.

Even if they were said to be the weakest, monsters were a dangerous existence and there was always a possibility of death.

Green Slimes used poison. What would happen if they attacked in numbers? It would surely become a threatening situation.

As Kagami watched the parent and child pair, he noticed that they did not seem to have much fighting experience.

If one had fighting experience, their posture wouldn't be so stiff. It was obvious the parent had grown up without fighting any monsters until now.

That wasn't very strange. In this world, it was normal to live without meeting monsters. Without experience, the possibility of dying was extremely high.

At any rate, if the situation didn't change, the parent and child pair would be killed by the attacking Green Slimes.

They would first receive a heavy blow, as if struck by an iron ball, and then be killed by poison.

However, this was only the case if you were Level 1.

A person's Level is the numerical growth value given to them by the God of this world. The value is proportional to the person's physical ability and it is possible to get convenient things like skills and magic, depending on the person's living environment. Some people could even receive Roles, given by God.

As for the Green Slime's attacks that would feel like the impact of an iron ball, someone who was Level 5 would only feel like they had been hit by a snowball. However, since the possibility of the parent and child pair being that Level was low, Kagami swiftly attacked the Green Slimes.

There were 8 roles that were capable of being called a Role: Warrior, Martial Artist, Priest, Magician, Thief, Merchant, Hunter, and Shaman. The three Roles that had a special power said to come from a Divine Revelation were: Royalty(王族), Heroes(勇者), and Sages(賢者).

Finally, the role with the largest population. They were weak and devoted themselves to developing their towns through Agriculture and Inns...the Villager.

For Villagers, who didn't have the power to fight, trying to live on monster subjugations was equivalent to suicide. Those who gained combat experience through such suicidal behavior were nearly nonexistent, and standard Villagers ranged from Levels 1 to 4.

Whether or not they gained experience or lived normally, Level 10 was the limit for Villagers.

Even if the parent's level was higher, they would be killed because they didn't know how to fight.

Kagami, who recognized this immediately, picked a small, round booger from his nose and flicked it.

Immediately afterwards, the Green Slimes were suddenly crushed to death. (TN: from a booger, yep)

The parent and child pair gaped in shock at the baffling phenomenon. They continued to watch, dumfounded, as the chunks of slime split apart and 80 Bronze appeared and fell to the floor from the defeated Green Slimes.

"Iyo- Were you fine? Are you ok? Yes, you're fine."

Kagami casually walked up to the parent-child pair while scratching his short, black hair. He did not look like a cool 20-year old who was skillful or attractive. Instead, he looked rather weak and seemed like the perfect example of a typical Villager.

"Th-this...Did you defeat it for us? How on earth did you do it?"

"Even though I only flung a booger at it?"

Kagami began picking up the fallen 80 Bronze while saying something that was impossible to understand. The parent-child pair had the same thought, while breaking into a cold sweat. “Bo...Booger?”

Was this young man strong enough to flick away the booger with that much power? Or was the booger unexpectedly dangerous? After witnessing such an insane scene happen in front of them, the parent-child pair considered their thoughts to be too trivial.

“Hey, boy. Take this.”

Kagami passed the 80 Bronze he had picked up to the young boy.

“The one who defeats the Green Slimes is the one who obtains the 80 Bronze too, right? Isn’t it amazing?”

“Eh...No, I don’t think so at all.”

“Yes, you are the definition of failing at life.”

After Kagami responded to the young boy, who had already associated Green Slimes with fear, he began walking back towards the town.

The parent-child pair watched his figure from behind and rose with surprise when they looked at Kagami’s Status Window.

It is possible for an individual to freely configure what information is shown on their Status Window.

Basically, parameters were displayed on the Status Window, and it was possible to figure out someone’s weaknesses from it. There were also many who displayed everything to the public to show off their strength.

However, the only information that Kagami had opened to the public was his Level and the Role given to by God.

Normally, there would have been nothing surprising about showing only these two pieces of information.

Even so, the parent-child pair stared at it, with their jaws wide open and their eyes bulging out of their sockets.

Kagami Kouji

Role: Villager

Lv: 999

CHAPTER 1

THE SPROUTING GRASS WHICH DECLARES THAT “WE ARE A PARTY OF HEROES!”

Part 1

Clear Earth, a world of magic and swords. In this world, death was tied to the concept of HP.

The rules were very simple.

If your HP dropped to 0, you died. If there was even 1 HP remaining, you would survive, although you would suffer from a serious injury.

However, the concept of HP wasn't the same as it was in a game. It was only there to reflect a person's health.

For example, hurting someone by flicking their forehead dozens of times wouldn't reduce their HP.

Essentially, HP would only drop when you took any substantial damage.

Kagami had heard from his mother that long ago, the Great Magician had wanted to display the Status of people's abilities. Over time though, it started to represent a person's identity and worth, eventually becoming a tool to manipulate people.

To Kagami, however, such things were trivial.

The idea of being discovered lying down in your house leisurely, going to the opposite side of the world instantly with a incomprehensible vehicle called an airplane, or strengthening your body by doing push ups and running were now just stories from the era of legends.

Now that he was living in this world where nobody knew him, Kagami had properly recognized this world as his reality.

Rather, Kagami had concluded that this world was great.

Kagami said something similar to a catch phrase: “This era is the best.”

If he had been born back in the era of legends, he would definitely have become the legendary 【Neet】 , who had been said to be good at doing nothing.

“Uoooooh! Amazing, this guy is amazing! With this, it’s 48 wins!?”

Such a reality had been enjoyed to the fullest.

This was Kagami.

Ninety percent of the gold in this world was used on entertainment.

Kagami had known this since he was young.

Thus, Kagami had decided to become stronger, in order to obtain gold.

However, at the same time, Kagami had known of his own weaknesses.

Villagers only have a limited amount of power to fight with.

Even if you struggled to get stronger as a Villager, your Status wouldn’t be nearly as strong as the Status of a person that possessed a role that was worthy of being called a Role.

However, this only applied when the people being compared were on the same Level.

If you just raised your Level, even Villagers could obtain enough power to pierce Green Slimes with boogers.

That was why Kagami had earnestly continued to defeat Green Slimes with long range attacks until his Level increased. In his first battle, he had noticed that he could defeat them without taking any damage if he played chicken and only used long range attacks.

As his Level rose, he would continuously move on to monsters that dropped larger amounts of gold. He had lost plenty of sleep during those twenty years, due to relentlessly killing monsters as if he were possessed.

As a result, Kagami had reached Level 999.

Now, Kagami could fool around in those entertainment sites; venues from legendary eras of the past. In present times, Game Centers had become Holy Lands where only millionaires could play due to the high costs of energy consumption.

“That guy, who on earth is he...?”

“Who knows, but seeing that speedrun of his, he probably comes here quite often. Even if he has a capable role and subjugates monsters, he wouldn’t have that much money to spend. I wonder what prosperous merchant family he comes from?”

Fundamentally, the role in one’s Status was not available for the general public to see. When two people conversed on equal terms, Level and Status became essential for distinction. It was said to be a breach of mannerisms to claim that one method of comparison was superior another. As an example, in the past it was often said that Villagers couldn’t fight even if they bought weapons.

Therefore, the public only needed to know a person’s Role when they requested a mercenary to accompany them in business or to formal meetings and appointments.

However, even Kagami had been hiding his Role. The reason was simple. The role of the Villager was thoroughly ridiculed. However, it would be a violation of mannerisms to be revealed as one. Since it was troublesome, it wasn’t shown to the public. The answer was to have money. As long as you had money, you would become known even if your role was hidden.

“Excuse me,.. You guys look like you aren’t just watching. Let’s compete. Zeze.”

Kagami’s playfulness, which seemed to be for fun, was actually due to his hunger for competition.

“Do-don’t be ridiculous! It’s not like we can play a game where the average merchant can normally bet 100 silver! We’re just talking together because we’re on a break from work right now!”

After the conversation, Kagami left the Game Center. It was foolish to play with 100 Silver, since there was no benefit for the people who just played normally. It was possible to stay at a high-class inn for five nights with that much money.

Kagami liked playing games. There was also the minimum amount of money needed to play. He was doing everything that he thought was fun, and, of course, gambling was also a favorite.

This was because Kagami, who had reached Level 999, had grown bored of earning gold.

Earning gold was not fun. It was often said that it might be good to have a job in order to be able to do fun things.

The average amount of gold obtained in a person’s life was 50 gold. Kagami currently held a little bit more than 5480 gold. Frankly speaking, there wasn’t really a point in earning anymore. There was a limit to how much land someone could buy, and people were restricted to owning a maximum of two buildings in the residential areas of the Imperial City.

Even then, Kagami, who was constantly chasing after monster subjugation quests, did not have a residence. He had considered hiring an exclusive house-maid, but since it would have been bad to drag someone around, he decided against it. As for casino management, although he would probably obtain money faster than if he kept defeating monsters, he had reached the conclusion that beating monsters was much more enjoyable.

Even while searching for another hobby, Kagami continued to earn gold.

If Kagami was asked if there was something he wanted, he would probably answer “No”, but he did have another reason for making money.

“...4515 gold now, huh? It’s still far away.”

After he left the Game Center that he had visited on a whim, Kagami went to the quest issuing Guild's window, which had been his original goal.

The Adventurer Guild was a recognized organization that issued quests for monster subjugation on behalf of the Imperial Capital, which controlled the politics and industry of the country.

The Guild paid compensation for completing their quests. Kagami had spent the week defeating monsters and completing quest after quest, earning a total of 5 gold, which was a lot of money.

Although 5 gold was a lot of money, it was not rare for there to be people holding that much inside the Guild. Even people who only had physical strength could diligently subjugate monsters.

Normally, Kagami would carry his bag of gold coins as if he were trying to hide it, but here he could carry it without worry.

Strong warriors were walking back and forth as they admired the newly issued quest that had been put onto the board, while groaning men quickly walked by behind them.

Kagami took the displayed parchment to the Guild's window and then left.

This parchment was the Kingdom's request for Adventurers. In addition to the request's goal, the product list recorded items, weapons, and armor that could not be obtained normally.

Although you had to buy them with money, it was well worth it. Among these items were potions that could be bought anywhere, and equipment that contained unique magical powers.

The Kingdom handled a wide variety of goods, which included limited-edition furniture from the best districts in town, somewhat dangerous toys, pets, exclusive maids and butlers purchasable from nobles, and even rights to slaves. However, these maids and butlers varied in prices as they differed in values. Generally, maids started at 20 gold while butlers at 50 gold. However, their price changed depending on their place of origin. If they came from the best areas in the district, they would cost up to 1000 gold, while being sold by nobles further increased their value to 2000 gold.

Items worth 5000 gold included unbreakable and treasured legendary swords that were said to be able to cut through any object, though there was no one who had bought an item for such a high price.

Above that were 6000, 7000, 8000, and 9000 gold legendary class goods, although he had never heard of someone wanting to buy them.

The reason was obvious. Such equipment was unnecessary. Even if you bought it, it didn't mean that you would defeat the Demon King with it. Would anyone putting their life on the line for the sake of their world buy such things for that much money?

People who were that stupid didn't exist.

However, there was one such idiot.

That person was Kagami.

Kagami's goal was to buy something that was priced at 10000 gold. Well, what was it? He didn't know what it would be. It had been declared to be an item that a Kingdom had never seen, in exchange for 10000 gold.

【10000 Gold : ???????】

No one had ever seen a person obtain this item. They were apparently called Unknown Products. This 【Something】 , was equivalent to paying 200 times a person's lifetime earnings. Nobody had tried to obtain it because they didn't know what it was.

Kagami had been put here to enjoy life to the fullest. It was a completely unknown item that nobody had managed to obtain. There were no other products that could make his heart dance this much. If anyone were to get an unobtainable legend, only that person would know of its true form.

The exhilarating sense of superiority felt after obtaining such items, coupled with the image of greatness, became the driving force for Kagami to earn gold.

However, although this was Kagami's final goal, it did not mean that he was in a rush to obtain it. He wasted money at his own pace, even as he steadily amassed the required amount of gold.

“Today is...over there. It’s sushi.”

He was also trying to splendidly spend the 5 Gold he had earned today.

Despite the fact that he had only been able to consistently earn one silver until recently, Kagami couldn’t forget the flavor of high-grade sushi. As he walked in the middle of the street, he drooled like an idiot as he imagined the taste of it.

This town was located southwest of the Imperial City, which was in the center of the world. It was said to be the eighth biggest town relative to the Imperial City. Its location near the sea caused many peddlers, traders, and traveling merchants to gather in order to purchase or sell rare goods. They were followed by people who were involved with monster subjugations, ranging from the members of the guild to mercenaries and even adventurers.

Although it had a much lower population, the town called Balman was just as vibrant as the Imperial City.

Even though Kagami did not have a base here, he often visited this town. It was because there were many interesting things here that attracted many people. The Game Center was one of those things.

“Haah-, as I thought, the town square is over there. Interesting.”

Kagami muttered while licking the ice cream that had captivated him on the way to the restaurant.

Recruiters often recruited party members, such as Guild members and skillful Adventurers, at the town square in order to complete quests. They often delivered speeches at Villas.

There were people attempting to recruit party members here and there, but today was slightly different.

An abnormal crowd of people were surrounding the lectern in the center of the Square.

“Gentlemen, don’t you want to change this world? Leaving your mark eternally in history...Don’t you want to become a legendary hero? That’s what I think! And...I want to release this world from suffering!”

“Uoooooooooooooh!”

“Why don’t Monsters disappear? Why isn’t the Imperial City issuing quests? Even if you move from town to town, won’t you only be hired as mercenaries?”

“Uoooooooooooooh!”

“Why must children...hold swords from an early age? Why do they have to rely on strong people? It’s because there are Monsters!”

A blond, friendly, and handsome youth, who wore a circlet decorated in jewelry, stood at the lectern.

He was well-dressed and wore a Protector that covered his vital areas, as well as elegant white clothes and a cloak that was neat, even though it should have been dirty.

Although the youth didn’t look strong with such clothes, he was hotheadedly saying things to the Adventurers.

By all rights it would be natural that people who couldn’t judge his power would consider him weak after seeing his tidiness, but this man was an exception. A Status Window was displayed next to the man, showing the Role 【Hero】 clearly written there.

It was the Role that was called the rarest of the rare, since there were so few of them in the world. Few people were lucky enough to meet one, so almost no one ignored the speech, instead crowding around him.

“Shut up, you’re troubling the neighborhood.”

This was Kagami’s first thought after meeting such a rare entity.

While it was good to give speeches and it was interesting since heroes were so rare, the people in the neighborhood should be considered as well. This was what Kagami

thought as he reminisced about an abnormally loud old man who had lived in the neighborhood in the past.

“The one controlling the monsters is the Demon King! That’s right, if you don’t defeat the Demon King, who is the root of all evil, peace will never come! In order to defeat the Demon King, I’m recruiting people who are confident in being able to fight together!”

“Uoooooooooooooh!”

“Follow me! It’s such a rare chance!”

The tough men in the Square grew excited. There hadn’t been anyone who had managed to defeat the Demon King yet. However, there had been those who had barely managed to reach the Demon King’s castle, and there were parties that had even managed to corner him. These parties always had someone who held the Role of Hero, which was the reason for the excitement.

With the possibility of one’s accomplishments going down in history, they all jumped at the chance to help the Hero.

“Hah...so sexy, a chance to go down in history. Moreover, wouldn’t it be a pleasure to go on a trip with such a beauty?”

“And it’s not just that. Look at that lady’s Role, she’s a Sage right? Their party doesn’t just have Heroes, but also Sages. If that’s the case, then perhaps this time we will be able to succeed in subjugating the Demon King.”

There was a woman standing, in a cowering position, next to the beautiful blond youth on the lectern. She had long, indigo hair and the bulge of her chest was large enough to be seen through her shirt. She was a stylish and slender woman who was shorter than the hero and looked somewhat innocent. It could be seen that she was still young enough to be called a girl.

Although she looked as if she wanted to sleep, she had a beauty that would cause people to turn around and stare if she walked through the town. The Sage was wearing many robes that were still able to expose her skin’s whiteness and a miniskirt which prioritized ease of movement. There was no reason for a healthy male to not be enthusiastic.

“Although, weren’t there Sages and Heroes who partied with each other in the past? Despite this, the Demon King remained undefeated and his strength has gone down in history. He was so powerful that he was known in legends as a fierce monster.”

“Idiot, a party isn’t perfect just because it has Heroes and Sages. Weren’t the other allies weak? In fact, wasn’t there a party that had made it to the Demon King’s castle even though they didn’t have any Heroes and Sages?”

One of the brawny warriors muttered something like “I’m only a strong man,” and laughed loudly.

In fact, although one didn’t require a Hero to reach the Demon Lord’s castle, a party without one would be seen as a group who fought dirty to get where they were.

This was the reason that Heroes and Sages would eventually end up placed into a party to go against the Demon King.

“Oi, Hero-sama! I’m 25 years old, and after doing monster subjugations, I have confidence in beating the crap out of monsters! How’s that? Won’t you take me?”

The big man who said this raised his hand straight up into the air.

The Hero who had been standing on the lectern directed his line of sight to the Role that the man displayed.

“...Warrior huh? Fumu. What Level?”

“Hehe, listen and be surprised...it’s 86! I absolutely won’t become a burden!”

The big warrior proudly opened and showed his Status Window as he said this. The surrounding people who were gathered in the Square raised their voices in praise with an “Ooh-”.

“86 is...no good. Next.”

“H-hey! Don’t screw around with me! Why did you say that it’s no good!”

Everyone gathered in the Square raised a voice in question at the way that the Hero had cut off the man with a single blow. Actually, the rejected big man cried out so loudly that they couldn't understand it.

"You're no Warrior...If we're talking about close combat here, then that's my Role. You wouldn't be able to do more work than me, so I can't take you into the party."

As the Hero said this, he opened and showed his own Status Screen.

The number 90 was clearly displayed beside the Level.

When the Warrior man saw this, he was at a loss for words.

"Although I don't know what kind of life you've come from, I also had the resolution to get to this point. If someone who has a Role that specializes in close combat wants to go with me, they have to be at least Level 100."

Many people raised a heartbroken voice at this declaration.

"Wait a minute! What exactly is the Level of the Sage-sama?"

"The woman is Level 42. That's enough, isn't it?"

"En-enough you say...! Her Level isn't even half of mine!"

"She is a Sage. She will definitely become an existence that can support me. She has far more value than you to begin with. Also...she is a princess of this country."

No one in the Square, with the exception of one person, could hide their surprise. The one person who wasn't surprised didn't care.

"She is the third princess of the Imperial City Hexal Doria; a righteous woman who received her fate as a Sage during childhood and has continued to practice since then. If she could defeat the Demon King...If a blood relative of the King were to defeat the Demon King, wouldn't the world become peaceful at that time?"

The Hero said something that was completely suspicious politically. However, at that point the large Warrior no longer had the energy to retort.

“Also, I’m recruiting up to two people! As it has been publicly announced, we still need to grow. As a matter of convenience, it’s impossible to afford to go on a journey with a big group! I can bet you that we will recruit again at the time of the decisive battle. Those who just want to be invited to slay the Demon King can gather at that time!”

After the declaration, the Adventurers who had gathered began to leave the Square one after another. Half of the remaining people were curious spectators, while the other half were uselessly trying to become members of the party.

By the way, exp could be obtained by defeating enemies. The value of exp dropped as the Level rose, but it would eventually make one stronger, and if you formed a party, it would be evenly distributed to each member.

It was more akin to being invited to a battle, rather than a party. Therefore, it was necessary for a party to have four people. As for formidable enemies, if one only wanted to defeat it, it was best to attack it with a large number of people.

“We-well take me along! I’m a Level 80 Monk!”

As the next person, a middle-aged, bearded, and slender man, introduced himself, he opened his Status Window.

“Nope, next please.”

“Wh-why!”

“The possibility of this becoming a long trip is high, and I do not know how many years it will take. It will be troubling if your movement suddenly worsens after a few years...and also, your defense is too low.”

The middle-aged Monk fell onto his knees, mutter “N-No way.” Even within roles and Roles, the Status wasn’t necessarily equal. A slight change in Status could be caused by one’s living environment, training that didn’t generate exp, or even eating habits. Skills and Magic had to be remembered too, so even if it was the same Level Monk, there would be a difference.

Kagami thought that if the Hero had managed to see that much, he would have to be considerably skilled.

“Well then, how about me! I’m a Level 73 Monk and I’m 20 years old!”

“No good, next.”

This time a slender young Monk introduced himself and, once again, was immediately refused, causing Kagami to change his mind about the Hero.

“Wh-why not!”

“You don’t have the goal of getting stronger in the future. Sorry, but give up.”

Honestly speaking, being able to see through them to that extent was normally impossible. Rather, it was impossible.

Kagami began to wonder if there was a certain evaluation criteria that this Hero used.

That was...the importance of enjoyment.

“U...Um, how about me? My Level is 50 though...”

The next one to call out was, like the Sage, a very young and small woman who had peagreen hair in pigtails that reached down to her shoulders.

Although it wasn’t like she was very beautiful, she did have big, adorable eyes which released an aura that made men unconsciously want to protect her.

“Fumu...accepted. Come join the party.”

The girl Monk’s expression brightened at the words of the Hero. At the same time, a storm of boos rushed in. Although one of the onlookers listened to reason, it was impossible to only respond to the crowd with the puzzling reason of “Her future is full of promise.”

Although this was only Kagami’s point of view, it was possible that the Hero’s role wasn’t actually suited for close combat and he would probably welcome others into the party if their Level was higher than 40.

However, that only applied to women.

The enjoyment the hero was planning to have was that of a fun harem trip as he was surrounded by beauties. Then he could obtain honor by subduing the Demon King. This was probably the most accurate conclusion. That's right, the Hero was a pervert.

"Yes, ye-s! Woah, what about me! I'll be helpful!"

As a trial test, Kagami raised his hand and only displayed his Role.

"A Villager? Ha... perhaps you're raising your hand in order to get closer to the Princess and me without even understanding your own position? Next. We only have room for one more person."

Sure enough, the Hero completely cut him off without even looking at his Status.

Normally, even if someone who had the standing of a Villager raised their hand, you would still look at their Status, but the Hero didn't even try to see it. At this point, it was utterly hopeless for him as a person.

Unless he was extremely strong, he would probably not be welcomed into the party.

Kagami lost all interest in the Hero who was overflowing with a teenager's lust and walked away from the area as the Hero chose a voluptuous woman who held the Role of Magician.

Part 2

The quest that Kagami received from the Guild was to subjugate 30 Blue Devils in the dungeon called, 【The Ancient Cave】 .

Many monsters could be found in the area surrounding the Dungeon, but the stronger ones were located inside. This was because the monsters outside were born naturally, while the monsters inside were formed through the Dungeon's miasma.

In other words, their strength was determined by the Dungeon's miasma.

The Dungeon would continue creating monsters even after reaching full capacity, causing some of the monsters to leave the Dungeon.

This was the reason why the Imperial City had issued this quest.

It was possible that one would encounter Blue Devils in the forest, on the way to the Ancient Cave.

If that happened, it would be extremely dangerous for Peddlers.

The Ancient Cave was a dungeon with a high risk of death for any party without at least four Level 70 Adventurers. Blue Devils normally stayed in the Dungeon, but if even one of them were to leave the Dungeon, it would become dangerous enough that low level Adventurers get chills simply from understanding why the quest had been issued.

"One Blue Devil drops 34 silver...so 30 of them means a total of 1020 silver. Completing the quest is 1 gold huh...easy money! I say today will be cake...no, crab! This Kagami has chosen crab today."

However, this was only good news for Kagami. He wasn't satisfied with just cake and had wanted to try eating crab. For Kagami, Blue Devils were as threatening as a dog and about as dangerous as Green Slimes would be for Warriors. Not only were they at the level of a dog, they were as threatening as a small dog like a Pomeranian.

"Gigiiiieegyaaaaaa!" (Xant: we're approaching black knight sfx here)

So, with the strong desire to fill up his piggy bank, Kagami hunted the Blue Devils. Even though normal people wouldn't want to encounter them, Kagami had degraded himself to the point that he hoped that they would appear quickly. Regardless of this fact, Kagami showed the true difference in ability between him and the Blue Devils.

When the Blue Devils appeared, they would screech in a voice that made one's hair stand on end. It was normal to see Kagami change directions and head towards the agonizing screams.

"Th-this is a r-rare drop! If I sell it, it would go for 700 silver...it's decided, Black Beef it is."

When monsters were killed, they could drop items in addition to gold. They were popularly named as Drop Items. These monster-specific items, often known as Rare Drops, scarcely turned up.

"A Blue Devil's horn? Even though it looks like this, it's surprisingly valuable, huh?"

As Kagami muttered, he confirmed the amount that had been automatically added to the quest form.

"15 remaining...? Although it's easy to defeat them, finding them is such a pain."

Kagami grumbled as he walked inside the Dungeon, which looked like gloomy ruins formed from earth and rubble.

Kagami could not find any more Blue Devils, to the extent that his surroundings became completely silent. He looked at the inside of the Dungeon with irritation as he took a piss and yawned.

As he walked towards the end of a passage, Kagami saw a person's silhouette squirming around. The people who visited this Dungeon were rarely in danger. Unless they were a reckless idiot, they would usually be a powerful person, like Kagami.

Speaking of a person's figure, the only monsters inside this Dungeon that appeared similar to humans would be the Blue Devils.

"The possibility of a group of Blue Devils being here is 99.999%, ooooh!"

Kagami raised his tension and approached the prey that had finally appeared with a dash. As he neared it, he saw the dim shadow of a human come into focus.

The instant he saw the blond hair of the figure in the vanguard, Kagami de-accelerated and swerved to the side of the pathway, wearing an expression that said it was the end of the world.

“A party of heroes?...heroes aren’t really that amazing...it feels about as noteworthy as seeing dog food on the side of the road.”

Kagami began to search the Dungeon while he felt embarrassed for having been in such high spirits. It was better not to wonder about why this party of Heroes had come to the Ancient Cave.

“Umm...hero-sama, didn’t something approach at a tremendous speed a little while ago?”

The female Monk with peagreen pigtails asked the Hero.

“Hmm? Ah, it was probably the monster that we were scared of and ran away from.”

“Is...that so?”

The Hero said, while holding a Blue Devil scale in one hand. It was a Drop Item that he had obtained through defeating the Blue Devils earlier. He did not need to worry about anything, in contrast to the girl Monk, who worried about the shadow that had disappeared.

“Even so, Rex...was it? Not bad. It’s my first time being able to defeat Blue Devils this easily.”

“Of course, after all, I am a Hero aren’t I? Even if that wasn’t the case, Blue Devils can be easily defeated as long as we have three strong people.”

The glamorous Magician with beautiful, wavy indigo hair said to Rex, impressed, and the blond Hero responded.

“Fighting an opponent of this caliber is a waste of time. Our goal is to defeat the Demon King and bring peace to this world.”

The dignified woman who had made a speech in the Square asserted coldly, as she forced her way in between the Hero and the long, indigo haired woman.

“Oooh, if it isn’t the enthusiastic princess. You had such a different atmosphere a little while ago.”

“Please stop addressing me that way. Right now, we are equal as comrades. I’m no different from a common warrior. As I mentioned earlier, my birthday is in October, and please call me Krul Hexal Doria.

“Since that’s too long, I’ll call you Kuu-chan. It’s fine to call me Palna, without honorifics.”

The tiresome female Magician called herself Palna Viole. For some unknown reason, Krul’s cold expression vanished and she mumbled “...Kuu-chan” while looking slightly happy.

“U-um! Is it also fine if I call you Krul-san? Of course, it doesn’t matter if you don’t use honorifics with me, Tina!”

The female Monk, Tina Beerus, bashfully suggested to Krul as her cheeks flushed red. Krul again nodded her head willingly, as her face lit up with an unhindered smile.

“Yea, this side of Kuu-chan is definitely cute. You should relax more.”

“I-I can’t do such a thing! Since my childhood, my father has been preparing me to subdue the Demon King! This trip isn’t something to enjoy!”

Krul said as she puffed her cheeks and looked away from Palna.

“U-Um...Krul-san, why has your goal been to defeat the Demon King since your childhood?”

When she saw how Krul acted, Tina asked an unexpected question.

Wearing an expression that made it seem as if she had been entrusted with an important mission, Krul slowly opened her mouth to speak.

“Long ago...there were no less than 196 countries. Now, after the appearance of monsters and the Demon King in Clear Earth, only three countries remain. Hexal Doria was once one part of a country called Japan. Do you understand what that means?”

“The size of the areas where people live in have shrunk.”

Krul asked Palna with a strained expression. The subject was common knowledge to all humans and Palna easily answered.

“That’s exactly right. It’s all because of the Demon King, who robbed us of our place to live with his monsters. We have to take it back...we shouldn’t have to live in a world where we are afraid of monsters! It might be surprising but...this was a world that originally didn’t have monsters.”

Krul, who had trained and studied to defeat the Demon King while growing up in the Royal Palace, appeared to know a little about the history of the world. Palna put on an unpleasant smile as her intuition as an older sister told her that this trip would be enjoyable.

“Well, even though I understand that, why is our first destination this Dungeon? Isn’t this in the exact opposite direction of where the Demon King lives?”

“Ah, I know that.”

Rex mentioned this to Palna and Tina, who had glanced at him and asked the question they had been thinking.

Then Rex, who had been examining the wall inside of the Dungeon, glanced at Palna and beckoned her to come over and take a look at the wall.

“Look at this.”

As Rex said so, he pointed to a pattern that emitted a faint, pale orange light inside the dimly lit Dungeon. The pattern was completely covered in dense moss due to the Dungeon having been formed from earth and rubble. Although it would have just been

seen as mysterious if there weren't any monsters, the presence of Blue Devils, which were high level monsters, only made the location induce fear.

"Is there something wrong with this pattern?"

Tina asked, unable to understand the difference between the pattern that Rex pointed at and the other patterns.

"There is a hidden room inside this Dungeon that only the Royal Family knows about. Following this pattern's path will lead to that place.

When Rex said so, Tina checked the pattern a second time. It did seem to be leading somewhere, and the path that they had passed through until now had been marked with dots.

"Hee, this Dungeon has such a trick. Is there something over there?"

"Something a Hero can only equip if they are over Level 90...a Holy Sword is resting there. Until now, no one has obtained it...there's no doubt that it's the strongest weapon."

Although Palna had thought that something might be there, it was unexpectedly something very important, to the point that she felt a little anxious.

"You say no Hero has obtained it until now...why has the Royal Family been so stingy with such a great weapon? Wouldn't we have defeated the Demon King if we had it?"

Rex gave a wry smile when he heard the question.

"As you know, although the Role that's called Hero is rare, it doesn't mean that only one of them exists. It had probably been left behind for a Hero that came from the Royal Family's lineage. Maybe they were worried that this Hero would be killed by the Demon King and become unable to continue the Royal line."

"Well then, why does Rex know this information?"

"I didn't say? It's because Krul is this country's princess. The King didn't want his cute daughter to be killed, so he graciously taught me."

Krul wanted to say, “that’s right,” in response to Rex, but decided to only nod instead.

“The subjugation of the Demon King will finally happen this time. A party with Heroes and Sages...why don’t we complete it with the legendary weapon? Nobody had managed to defeat him before because the party hadn’t been completed!”

Regardless of whether or not he believed that he could defeat the Demon King, Rex smiled fearlessly and headed towards the path that was marked by the pattern floating on the wall of the Dungeon.

Krul followed the Hero without a moment’s delay.

“We might have joined a really amazing party, right Palna-san?”

Tina slightly panicked as she thought that the possibility of them subduing the Demon King was higher than they had thought.

“Well, it seems like it will become an interesting trip from here on out. Fufu...let’s enjoy it.”

Palna, who had confirmed that this party would be more interesting than she had imagined, chased after Rex and walked up next to him while smiling.

“Which reminds me, Rex, although everyone decided their nicknames earlier, is it fine to just call you Rex? To begin with, what’s your full name?”

“My name is Rex...just Rex.”

Rex responded and walked toward the end of the passage, as if dodging the question. He did not care about nicknames. The most important thing was to subdue the Demon King so he could get fame and status. While repeating that to himself in his mind, Rex Chickyboy (レックス・チクビボーイ) headed towards the room with the Holy Sword.

Part 3

“With this it’s down to 28...Only 2 left?”

About a dozen or so minutes after encountering the Hero’s party, Kagami, who had been surprisingly lucky, nearly subjugated enough Blue Devils to complete the Quest.

Normally, people would prioritize safety on the first day and complete the Quest on the second day, since Blue Devils could be dangerous depending on people’s Levels. However, Kagami had nearly completed it after merely three hours.

Blue Devils were blue skinned creatures with wings that were unusable in the Dungeon. They had abnormally large, red eyes that made them look similar to ermines. They also attacked irregularly by using magic or using the Dungeon’s walls to tackle their opponents and pierce them with their tridents.

Although he encountered other monsters, it took a while before Kagami could find the last two Blue Devils.

In an instant, they changed into Gold and Drop Items, disappearing afterwards.

“Today sure is a lucky day, though I don’t understand why.”

Originally, higher Monster encounter rates usually resulted in a higher chance of death due to the increased danger, but for Kagami, there was only an increase in the chance of gold dropping.

Utilising their incredible speed, the provoked ermines attempted to tackle him from outside his field of view, but they slammed into the ground as if hit by a flyswatter and became gold, which Kagami triumphantly picked up.

“...I have to hurry.”

Kagami suddenly heard a muttering voice nearby.

Looking back through the passage at the crossroad where the voice originated from , at the last moment, he saw a young lady dressed in a tattered, hooded cloak cross the passage.

Although he only saw her for a moment, he came to the conclusion that it was a woman from the red hair that had peeked out of the hooded cloak and the white thighs that he had seen between her knee-high socks and mini-skirt.

Kagami noticed that the height of the figure was only around 130 cm; she was clearly a child. He guessed that she was probably around 10 years old.

“Eh, isn’t it dangerous?”

Kagami hurriedly began to follow the young lady that had disappeared into the passage.

Although Kagami had already been fighting Dungeon Class Monsters at that age, he went through many near death experiences. The abnormally high encounter rate made the situation even more dangerous.

Although he recognized that she must have great abilities to be able to come to this Dungeon, he continued to chase after her.

Moreover, Kagami knew that nobody else had his kind of lifestyle. Still, whether or not it was their own fault, if there was a possibility of death and they weren’t a bad person, Kagami would help them. This was the one policy that Kagami valued more than earning gold.

Although he wouldn’t go on journeys specifically to save people’s lives, he unintentionally accumulated good deeds due to this simple policy of his: 【Don’t abandon people who are dying right in front of my eyes】 .

Still, while Kagami would save people in front of him, he wouldn’t do it at the expense of his own life. Never get involved with things unknown. A coldhearted policy that was also as friendly as it could be.

“Hold up, wait! The girl over there! This Dungeon is far more dangerous than you might think! STOP!”

Kagami shouted at the girl immediately after catching up, but she didn’t try to stop at all.

Since she had definitely noticed Kagami, it was obvious that she was deliberately continuing. Kagami, even if confused, wouldn't hesitate to protect her from harm, whether or not she was strong enough to not require any help.

Of course, it would normally be very suspicious for a young man wearing rough clothes that offered no protection to challenge the Dungeon, since it was dangerous. There were also Monsters that mingled with human society, although maybe that was foolish of them since they tended to act strangely. In fact, the girl who was running from Kagami looked back at him with doubt in her eyes.

“Ahead! Look ahead of you! There are Monsters!”

Kagami warned the girl, who glanced back at him dubiously.

Three Blue Devils were standing right in front of her and blocking her way. Although Kagami felt relieved when she stopped, the girl immediately walked past the three Blue Devils.

“Hey!? Why aren't you killing these Monsters, child!”

Part 4

The three sleeping Blue Devils instantly noticed Kagami's figure. Since they would begin to swoop down and attack him immediately, he abandoned his thoughts of whether or not she was an illusion.

"Oops...I should pay attention, or else that girl...is she over there?"

Before the three Blue Devils could even approach, Kagami dealt a backhanded blow to the Blue Devil closest to him, slapping it into the Dungeon's right wall; whilst the girl wondered who this person was.

Then, another Blue Devil immediately tried to attack but Kagami struck it with his fist, sending it into the Dungeon's left wall. The remaining Blue Devil that tried to attack from the front was blown away by a roundhouse kick to its chest.

All of them were destroyed by a single hit from Kagami, changing into Drop Items and Gold.

"Argh! Damn it! I lost sight of her!"

Kagami seemed to cry out, but he intentionally stopped following the girl and began to pick up the Drop Items and Gold. However, that was not because he gave Drop Items priority over the girl's safety.

It was because he realized that the girl wasn't in danger.

Kagami had come to a conclusion as to what the girl was. In this world, there were no humans who didn't attack monsters.

"There isn't a settlement nearby so...I wonder what I should do?"

Even though Kagami no longer had a reason to stay because the quest for subjugating 30 Blue Devils was complete...He was genuinely worried about why the girl was in such a place and hurried back to the passage that the girl had faced, following the faint traces of magic remaining in the air.

"Umm...Hero-sama. Somehow...isn't the number of monsters strangely high?"

“...Indeed. Since not all four of us have exceeded Level 70, continuing to fight would be a little difficult.”

Even though it would be easy to defeat a lone Blue Devil with the high Level 90 Hero Rex’s abilities, it would be more difficult to deal with a large number of them simultaneously. Just defeating them was easy, but it was important for him to protect his low level allies.

If multiple enemies attacked at the same time, Rex would be unable to block all of them and the three backline supporters would be in danger.

“I’ve almost exhausted my body’s magic...I will run out after three, no, four more battles.”

If the party’s formation was disrupted, Krul, who was still Level 42, and her dress would take a lot of damage from just one attack.

Of course, Tina would immediately respond if someone got hurt. She healed her teammates’ wounds by converting her magic power into healing magic. Although Rex was there to receive most of the damage, Krul took some damage due to being in the vanguard.

Tina also received damage because she was continuously using support magic near Rex. Palna was the only one to take no damage at all.

“Palna-san is amazing. You steadily continue to avoid enemy attacks while properly supporting Hero-sama. Someone as slow as me...couldn’t do such a thing.”

Tina said, while looking at Palna with admiration.

“Even though I’m a magician, there are a lot of times where one dives into a dungeon alone, so for this occasion I made it my goal to get used to fighting.”

Palna answered while dusting off her clothes. The dust was a side-effect of her magic, a magic attack that released a void blade.

“I’m also Level 78, but we would have turned back a long time ago if Monk Tina wasn’t here, so you are just as helpful.”

Palna said while facing Tina, who was a head shorter than she was, and rubbed her head without hesitation.

“I-I’m sorry...for becoming a burden.”

Krul said while shrugging her shoulder, clearly impatient and fatigued.

Krul, who was not at the proper level, had raised her level until now while being protected by a party and was not used to combat situations where she was the target of the attacks.

For Krul, who had fought as the only rearguard member with three vanguards, it was the first time she had experienced Monsters approaching her from such a close distance.

Due to her status as a princess and her level of training, she couldn’t be exposed to any danger, causing her to become a significant burden in combat.

“Don’t worry about it. The Princess’s level is lower than ours, so it’s fine if you just get used to it for now.”

“But...thanks to me, it’s become so dangerous that everyone had to keep looking back at me. I have to be more useful or such things will...”

“No, the Princess is already giving it her all. Take a look at this for me.”

As he said this, Rex pointed at the far side of the passage. A light could be seen, unexpectedly glowing in the normally dim Dungeon.

“That light is...in other words, it’s our goal.”

Palna said while smiling, instantly understanding what the unusual light indicated.

“Finally...Even if we encounter monsters later on, we can just run away from them while prioritizing returning to the town. It will be a lot more fun than completely defeating them.”

Tina said after letting out a sigh of relief.

Rex, who had been impatient with the speed it had taken to get here, tottered along as if he had removed some weights and raced as if in a fervor into the room that was emitting light.

“...This is the resting place of the legendary Holy Sword that was passed down by the Royal Family!”

The party had gotten used to the dim light of the Dungeon and reflexively squinted their eyes in response to the white light emitting from the room.

As their eyes gradually got accustomed to the light, they all stared at the room’s strangeness.

It was a wide, empty, dome-shaped room with white light emitting walls, and despite being inside the dungeon, the place had a feeling of divinity.

In the center of this room was a white pedestal that surely had the legendary Holy Sword stuck in it. Standing in front of the pedestal was the figure of an approximately ten year-old girl in a tattered cloak, squirming and rummaging around while obstructing the party’s field of view.

“...Who are you?”

Part 5

Rex questioned the girl, who was moving around suspiciously in front of the pedestal.

However, the girl was extremely focused and did not seem to notice the Hero's presence. Instead, she examined the pedestal in an agitated manner.

"What are you doing?! And who the hell are you?!"

The Hero shouted after he grew impatient with the girl, who had not shown any reaction.

When she finally noticed him, the girl instantly froze and fearfully looked behind her. She had braided red hair, large pupils that were clearly childish in shape, a typical small nose and mouth, and a hostile expression.

She glared at Hero Rex's party like a cornered animal.

Rather than wondering why a girl was in a place like this, Krul sensed the abnormal magic power the girl gave off.

"Ah...That woman is probably a demon. I think she is the reason why there are more monsters inside the Dungeon."

As soon as they determined that the woman in front of them was an enemy, the party readied itself for combat.

There were three large tribes in this world; the Humans, the Monsters, and the Demons. Monsters were an existence that spawned in large quantities. Although they looked very similar to humans, they carried a huge amount of magic inside them.

As for Demons, their appearance was almost human, but their abilities differed significantly. Their physical strength and intelligence was on par with those of a Hero and a Sage, respectively, going far beyond a normal human's capabilities.

"What are you doing...in a place like this? Oh, I know! Is your objective the Holy Sword?!"

Rex stepped closer as he spoke, causing the girl to retreat another step. The top of the pedestal came into view, and Rex noticed that there was no Holy Sword stuck inside it.

“You bitch...where have you taken the Holy Sword?”

Demons and Humans were bitter enemies. Powerful weapons that only human Heroes could handle would only be a threat to Demons. Rex readied himself to attack her, believing that she had come to steal the Holy Sword, because powerful weapons that only human Heroes could handle would pose a threat to the Demons. Therefore, it was natural for Rex to target her. However, moral questions such as “Why should I attack such a young Demon girl?” never crossed his mind.

It was common knowledge that Demons were enemies that had to be defeated, even if they were like this girl. Magic emanated from a Demon’s horns, and that magic caused Monsters to spawn, which was inconvenient for Humans.

Demons and Humans had different affinities with magic. However, there was no need for Demons to attack Monsters because Monsters were born from the magic of the Demons and would usually obey them... Of course, Monsters would oppose the Demons if they decided to kill one another, but that would never happen because they weren’t enemies in the first place. This was why Demons received the same treatment as Monsters.

The only purpose Demons had in this world was to be destroyed. Since Demons were born with an abnormal amount of magic, the subjugation of the Demon King, who continued to produce large numbers of Monsters, was the greatest goal of the Humans.

“Answer me! Where is the Holy Sword?! How did you pull it out!”

Holy Swords couldn’t be pulled out if one didn’t have the Role of Hero. Even so, there was no Holy Sword stuck inside the pedestal. There was also no sign of the girl holding the Holy Sword.

“I...am not doing anything. I’m not pulling anything out.”

She muttered an answer while facing the Hero, sweat dripping from her cheek. He let out threatening roar that pierced her eardrums in response.

Even so, there were no signs that she was concealing the Holy Sword on her, nor did she have the stature to completely hide it.

“Rex-sama. What should we do?”

“There’s a high chance that she’s telling a lie... Either way, she’s a Demon. Let’s take her down.”

The moment after saying this, Rex drew his sword and began to focus, causing a pale, white light to start shining from his whole body and cover his sword, making it look like the light was flowing into it.

“Don’t get near her or lower your guard just because she’s still a child. Take her down in one hit with long range attacks.”

Palna and Krul nodded in response to Rex and began to cast their spells.

The moment Rex gave the signal, large blades of ice appeared around Krul and shot towards the girl.

Rex slashed in a straight line towards the girl along with Palna’s blades of wind, releasing a flash of light.

Whether or not they had made a mistake in calling her a Demon, in that moment, before Rex even finished his attack, something flew towards the girl.

It suddenly stopped in front of her and received all of the damage from the party’s attacks.

“You guys...what are you doing, ganging up on someone who’s only a child?”

The collision with Rex’s flash of light caused a tremendous explosion to ring out, along with clouds of smoke.

An alarming voice rang out, ignoring the tense atmosphere. Rex threw a question at the intruder.

“Who are you? Her ally!?”

Rex's party fell back a few steps, alert to the presence of the person hidden within the smoke.

Immediately after, Palna generated some wind with her magic and cleared away the smoke.

"Who...are you?"

The Hero's party was bewildered by the strange spectacle. The one who was standing in front of the girl was, without a doubt, a human.

In addition to that, it was a young man who had entered this dangerous, high level dungeon while lightly equipped. No, the plain cloth and leather clothes he was dressed in did not even qualify as light equipment.

He had short black hair and a mediocre face. The man yawned despite the current situation.

"Me? I'm just a villager passing by."

Part 6

“Vill...ager?”

The person’s response distressed Rex, and he had a plethora of questions to ask.

How did he protect himself from their attacks? Why was a villager in such a place? Why was he not equipped with any weapons or armor? Why did he protect the Demon?

Rex could not understand the person in front of him. Why was he picking his nose in this situation? Perhaps he looked down on them? Everyone in the Hero’s party had similar thoughts.

“The Villager from back then!?”

Rex finally remembered that he and the villager had momentarily interacted with each other only a few hours ago. Kagami’s presence had been too weak, and Rex had completely forgotten about him.

“...How did you...?”

“Eh?”

“How did you block our attacks? What did you do? Exactly what kind of item did you use?!”

Why was he here? Rex’s pride ignored the fact that Kagami had protected the Demon. He had let the Villager in front of him shatter his confidence. Rex was in disbelief and could not forgive Kagami.

“An item? Ah...yes, fufu, shall I inform you?”

Rex waited for the answer with a sour face while Kagami smiled sentimentally and picked his nose, as if he was making fun of the Hero.

“The strongest item I used...is my right hand.”

“Your right hand...you say?”

As he spoke, Kagami pulled out a booger and flung it away with a *Pin* sound before putting his finger straight back into his nose.

“Wait, haven’t you only been picking your nose this whole time?”

“Yes, I crushed all of your attacks with this right hand that picks my nose this much.”

“Impossible! With a hand covered in boogers?”

“Hold up, it’s not covered with them, right? Just how much mucus do you think my nose makes?”

Whether or not what they pointed out had hurt him, Kagami took his finger back out of his nose and sighed.

Krul stepped forward in an attempt to calm down Rex, who stared at Kagami angrily.

“Whatever you did, at least you are uninjured. It would have been terrible to kill a regular citizen.”

Krul politely lowered her head. She did not care about how he had protected the Demon. Her priority was to find out why this Villager had protected the Demon, and whether or not he was an enemy.

“That child is a Demon. Did you protect her because you knew this, or did you not know anything? Please tell us.”

“No, this child is not a Demon.”

Kagami replied to Krul’s question, as if to declare that they had misunderstood. Of course, Kagami knew that the girl was a Demon.

He also knew that the Heroes would try to kill the girl because she was a Demon.

“I can feel that girl emitting Demon magic. There is no doubt that it’s a Demon.”

“Ah...she isn’t a Demon. Because she is my little sister.”

Everyone in the hero's party looked at him when they heard his words. The girl muttered "eh?" in a dubious tone, making the situation even more puzzling.

"Y-your sister? H-however...this magic? Though you do seem to be a Human..."

"It's this, the horn of the Blue Devil. Don't you know about its effects? I made my little sister hold it."

Kagami said as he reached into the girl's worn out cloak, as if he was going to show them the horn of the Blue Devil that the girl supposedly held.

As long as the Blue Devil's Horn still held magic, it could prevent Monsters from becoming hostile to the holder. Bottles and wineskins were needed to prevent the magic from dissipating.

However, this magic was the same type as the magic emitted from Demons and would increase the spawn rate of Monsters when used in a dungeon. It was extremely aggravating for any other people who entered the dungeon at the same time.

"I was completing the Blue Devil quest when it just happened to drop, so I made my younger sister hold it. I didn't bring a bag to store it in but I didn't want to waste it, so I told her to keep it safe."

Kagami pulled out the completed 30 Blue Devil quest sheet with magic and showed it to the Hero's party.

Of course, Kagami had taken the sheet out of his Bag of Holding.

As Kagami talked with the Hero's party, he glanced around quickly, hoping that the Demon girl's presence was spawning a large number of Monsters. He evilly thought about how nice it would be if another quest like this one were to be issued.

"A...Villager? And two of them? 30 Blue Devils? I have never heard of this!"

Tina unintentionally raised her voice, surprised that the girl was not a Demon and the Villager had already completed the quest.

"That's not much of a joke. Are you really a Villager?"

Kagami showed his Status Window's Role with a wry smile when Palna accused him. Palna muttered "You're kidding..." when she saw that Villager was indeed written there.

Palna had definitely thought that he was lying when he called himself a Villager. They had never heard of a Villager being able to enter such a high level dungeon, so Tina and Palna could not hide their astonishment when they saw that he was telling the truth.

"The Blue Devil's Horn effect only lasts for about five minutes..."

Although the party was surprised that a Villager was in such a high level dungeon, even if he had the protection of a Blue Devil's Horn, they no longer felt uncomfortable, and Krul asked another question.

"Excuse me, may I take your sister's hood off?"

"That's a little...well, my little sister is a shy person after all."

"Why? Won't we be convinced if you allow us to take a quick look?"

"My sister...if I show her to you, she would go berserk trying to hide her embarrassment. It's a sickness she has."

"But...I have never heard of such an illness?"

Kagami never thought that he would be questioned so insistently and he realized that his deception was falling apart. After observing the situation, as if realizing that it couldn't be hidden any longer, the girl removed her hood on her own.

"H-Hey!"

When she took off her hood, it became clear that the hood had been hiding more than just her head. She had red hair that glittered like a jewel, with a woven pigtail that hung down on the right side of her face. There were two small horns on the back of her head that had grown bent downwards and mixed with her shoulder length hair.

Kagami lightly sighed with an "Acha-" when he saw this.

“Please turn around.”

Krul immediately instructed the girl. The girl turned her back to Krul and exposed a horn growing on the back of her head.

“It’s as I thought...you don’t have an excuse for this, right?”

The girl gave up after seeing Krul prepare her Rod. She felt gratitude toward the Villager youth who had appeared and protected her.

However, excuses could only go so far.

If the excuses went on any longer, they would stop thinking of this Villager as a companion and he would be in danger. She didn’t want that to happen.

“No, look! This horn is...an accessory.”

However, Kagami, who had not give up for some reason, came up with a farfetched excuse and tried to protect the girl.

The girl stared at Kagami, who had not even tried to abandon her even though it had been the perfect opportunity to do so, with round eyes, surprised.

“An accessory? There’s a horn growing on the back of her head no matter how you look at it!”

The Hero’s party grinned at the pathetic excuse.

“No...this, it’s that, on here. I put it onto the back of her head.”

“Y-yes?”

It was painful to just imagine how such an impossible accessory would be attached, and the Hero’s party unintentionally made doubtful expressions and sour faces.

“Lo-look! Such feelings are...I said, ‘Hoi!’”

Kagami grasped the Blue Devil's Horn and forcibly thrust it into the side of the pedestal, causing a loud, dull sound to echo in the surrounding.

"Eeeeh..."

Tina, Palna and Krul backed away from him.

Only Rex was astonished at Kagami's behaviour, to the point that his eyes were bulging.

This Villager had, with his strength alone, thrust into and broke the pedestal, which had been made from a highly resilient, special material in order to seal the Holy Sword until the Chosen human took it.

"B-but! Even though animals form such horns, I have never seen any monsters do so!"

Tina's words were painful for Kagami to hear.

"This...umm...this, after the horn broke once...it was held together with an adhesive, and to improve the horn's form just now...it was pierced."

Palna furrowed her brow and uttered "Haa?" in confusion at the words.

Kagami quickly considered the situation and immediately followed up with more words.

"Ah, wrong! Look at this! I gave it to my cousin! I made a mistake! As for my little sister...that's right! Custom! The horn I attached to her was specially made!"

Part 7

Kagami looked like he didn't care that he had lost the argument as he told the obvious lie to the Hero's party with a bragging face, brimming with confidence. Krul cutely let out an unintentional laugh. If he was this desperate, it didn't matter whether the girl was a Demon or not.

"Fufu..Ahahaha! I understand. Let's leave the topic of the horn alone. Even though there might be a different reason, I won't ask about it any more."

Kagami snickered to himself when he heard Krul's words.

With a heave-ho heave-ho, a mysterious festival attended by many Kagamis started in his mind while crying in his heart, "This is the Power of my excuses!!!!!" (Xant: He uses weird words...imagine opening a stage curtain.)

"However, the Holy Sword is a different matter."

Rex suddenly shouted seriously, immediately bringing Kagami back to reality.

Rex tolerated Krul's selfish remark, and after he put the issue of the Villager's abnormal abilities aside, the only thing remaining was the objective that he had come to this dungeon to fulfill.

"What has your sister been doing here, in this room?"

The girl did not answer the question that Rex threw at her.

What was the girl's purpose in coming to this room? She definitely wouldn't talk about her own reasons, and even if she did, it was possible that she wouldn't be able to direct them to the location of the Holy Sword. She wouldn't even try to answer them.

The Holy Sword had already been missing when the girl arrived at this room.

Such a thing would normally have to be on the pedestal...Since the Hero's party appeared but didn't have the sword, there was nothing to explain its disappearance.

Kagami realized that the girl's objective had definitely been to destroy the Holy Sword, but he didn't voice his thoughts.

"I said that my sister got lost and ended up here by chance."

"This isn't a place that you can find by accident! Even if it happened, there's no way that the Holy Sword would disappear at the same time!"

"But it did happen didn't it? Or rather, who cares if the Holy Sword has disappeared?"

"I...I am the Hero! The Chosen Human! The only one who is allowed to wield the Holy Sword!"

"Eh...sorry. If you're talking about the sword that was stuck in here, I already found it...and brought it back to town quite a while ago."

Kagami unintentionally apologized to Rex, who was desperately shouting "I'm a Hero!".

Everyone there turned and stared at Kagami when they heard his calm words.

Even though they had many things they wanted to ask, no words came out. Even the Demon girl was at a loss for words when she heard remarks that should never have come from a normal Villager.

"You said...the Holy Sword, that was the Royal Family's heirloom, was brought back?"

Rex asked Kagami, trembling with fear.

"Eh!? The Royal Family?...It was THAT Royal Family? Crap! I took it back and sold it to merchants as fast as I could! It's probably being sold for a high price at a store right now."

"S-sold...?"

Rex distantly heard those words and forgot to close his mouth.

Meanwhile, Kagami had remembered that he had sold the sword that used to be here for a high price and thought: “So, it was a sword that was passed down within the Royal Family!”, convincing himself.

“Don’t lie to me! Only those who have the Role of Hero are permitted to wield that Holy Sword, so it must have been sealed by an Ancient Sage’s magic! It would be impossible for you to carry it!”

“Ah...certainly, it was a bit heavy. I think it was about 800 Kilos. Still, I managed to hold it normally? I also pulled it out of the pedestal.”

The atmosphere froze as each member of the party wondered how a human that could mention a weight of 800 Kilos could exist.

“That story...is such bullshit! You Villager...there isn’t any reason for you to be able to hold it, is there!”

“It was certainly heavy. If I used it, it would have been the way I used a normal sword. Even if it’s probably too heavy to use, if I managed to pull it out, wouldn’t it be possible for me to wield it? If you had tried, maybe you would have been able to pull it out as well.”

“What kind of idiotic shit are you...”

“No no, hey now.”

Kagami looked at Rex, who didn’t believe anything he said, and judged that it would be faster for him to show them directly. He slightly lowered his waist and firmly grabbed the edge of the pedestal, looking like he was going to attempt to lift the pedestal with all of his strength.

Tina, Palna, Krul, and the female Demon all thought that it was absolutely impossible.

However, Rex, remembering the absurd way the Blue Devil’s Horn had been thrust into the pedestal earlier, broke out in a cold sweat as he thought that it might be possible.

A few seconds after Rex thought that, cracks began to appear on the ground.

“That’s...impossible.”

Instantly after the cracks formed, they widened and split open, causing a screeching, echoing noise. After the earth shook and a huge bang resounded, Kagami was lifting the pedestal of the Holy Sword, as though he was the embodiment of the Earth’s wrath.

Dust and sand filled the air, and a dull sound resonated from the ground, as if its will had been torn away.

The soil scattered in front of Rex. Kagami, who was standing a bit further away, looked at Rex with a beaming smile.

“Hey?”

Kagami threw away the pedestal as he spoke, and it landed with a thud. After seeing this, everyone was speechless.

This normal Villager had done such an outrageous thing in a composed manner.

All because of a Villager. No Role should be capable of doing such a thing, yet the young Villager in front of them had shown them otherwise.

Fear shot through Rex’s body, underneath his shock. Until now, whether people trained on their own or were familiar with fighting, he had thought that no other humans of his age would match his level.

Rex realized that there was no limit to excellence and his mind snapped. The person that stood before him was the embodiment of a monster.

“L-Level?”

Rex barely managed to squeeze the question out of his mouth.

“999.”

Kagami stopped teasing him and casually displayed his Status Window and his Role.

The displayed description clearly stated,

Role: Villager

Level: 999

Everyone else in the room froze, as if they had turned into statues.

Part 8

It was impossible. That number had never been seen before.

Levels rose by one after a person managed to gain 1000 exp.

Fundamentally, the experience for raising a person's level was gained when that person grew physically and mentally, whether they did special training or just defeated Monsters.

You could quickly gain experience by defeating Monsters, but there was a limit to the amount that you could receive . For example, you could only gain exp from Green Slimes until you hit Level 3, because Green Slimes were Level 3.

Anyone was able to see a Monster's Level by using 【Spectacle】 , a lens-like item that was sold by the Quest Guild.

In order to get exp to raise your Level, you had to defeat Monsters that were at an equal or higher Level.

Your Level wouldn't rise even if you constantly defeated weak enemies. Also, exp wouldn't be received if you beat an enemy equal to your Level with someone else's help.

Just as the name "exp" indicated, it was only a measure of one's experience. When one was in a party, only the members who contributed to defeating an enemy would obtain a significant amount of exp.

Even though it was possible for Level 1's to get exp from subjugating Blue Devils while in a Level 70 party, there wasn't much of a difference from the exp they would gain when defeating Green Slimes on their own.

That was because the exp would only get evenly distributed for the Level 70s in a Level 70 party. Lower leveled members would get much less exp, even if the party fought enemies that were overwhelmingly stronger.

Furthermore, exp was not obtained unless one contributed to the battle.

Although the support class, Monk, could easily obtain exp by supporting their allies, others had to take enemy attacks or damage the enemy to get exp.

Therefore, there weren't many low Level Adventurers who would take the risk of death and form a party with a high Level Adventurer. There also weren't many high Level adventurers who would take and willingly share exp with a person that would only be a burden.

There were convoys whose primary purpose was to gather gold and Drop Items without interference. Although some people would level up from saving others from death, most of the members were aiming to get rich from participating.

Regardless of whether one usually formed a party with people at the same Level, it was normal for a Hero-like party to level others in order to complete a special objective.

Also, the Villager was a weak Role. When a Level 3 Warrior and a Level 3 Villager fought, the Warrior would win.

Even when a Level 30 Villager fought a Level 10 Warrior, the Warrior would win. The Villager was weak enough that no one would recruit them, and even if they raised their Level they would be useless.

It was commonly said that Villagers who managed to get gold would save it and then pay someone to Level them because of their weakness. This caused most Villagers to accept that only other Roles could get to higher Levels.

However, the strongest Villager Rex had ever seen before had only been Level 30. Even if they raised their level, Villagers were worthless in a fight.

Although they were equivalent to Level 30 monsters, there was no point in forcing a Villager with weak abilities to fight when there were many other Roles that were far stronger.

Still, the Villager in front of him had a Level value of 999.

"I-...I-...Impossible."

Rex voiced everyone's opinion of Kagami while trembling.

Reaching that Level was something that was impossible. Even the Legendary Hero, who had barely managed to reach the Demon King and was once referred to as the Strongest Arriver in History, had only been Level 253.

Yet the man in front of him, who was not only of a similar age but...a Villager, the Role most likely to die, was a higher Level than that Legendary Hero.

It was impossible even if the world had turned upside down.

"How on earth did you do it? What did you do to reach that Level!? And as a Villager! How? Answer...Answer me!"

Rex had completely forgotten about the other matters, including the Holy Sword. Ever since he was five years old, he had been special, and he had thought that he would be the culmination of everyone's hopes and expectations.

It was a mission that only he could complete. It was impossible for anyone else to do it, so he struggled to become stronger and always fought. However, the man in front of him had revealed a number so high that even he hadn't been able to reach it, despite his own efforts.

What was it that he couldn't forgive? Rex could not forgive the reality that a Villager, the most difficult Role to level, had climbed to Level 999 instead of himself, who was given the Role of the Hero.

Instead of being at a disadvantage, he was stronger than Rex. An existence that was much stronger than him would be the pinnacle of the human race, and Rex was unable to accept it.

"Maybe it's because I've been fighting Monsters everyday?"

Kagami replied while yawning, as if the reason was inconsequential. Kagami's actions irritated Rex, due to his pride.

"If it's just that, I've also done the same thing! Even though you seem to be telling the truth, that number is...impossible."

“If might be the same if you were just defeating regular Monsters.”

“Just by defeating regular Monsters? Don’t fuck with me! I’ve beaten more Monsters than anyone else and even did special independent training...!”

“Shut it, you damn annoyance! Do things like how I raised my Level or what I’ve done until now even matter? This is reality! No more talking!”

Kagami realized that he couldn’t take his statements back or keep talking even if he had to return to a regular life, so he roared at the Hero and decided to leave.

“Hey, let’s go, little sister.”

“Eh? Eh...ah, yeah.”

The girls in Rex’s party also had many things that they wanted to ask. However, they were unsure if it would be alright for them to say anything and could only watched as Kagami began to leave while pulling the Demon girl’s hand.

“Wait...If you have so much talent, what are you doing? What is your goal in life? If it’s you...I’m sure that you could defeat the Demon King!”

However, for the Hero, this was something that involved his pride and he had to ask for an answer.

“Eh? I’m just living normally and saving up gold...Since the Demon King and things like that don’t matter much to me, I’ll leave it up to the Hero-samas. The present Demon King isn’t really bothering me anyways.”

Kagami answered as if he was rejecting the Hero’s goal in life. For Kagami, the Demon King was beneficial existence that spawned Monsters so that he could make money.

There also wasn’t a good reason for Kagami to subjugate the Demon King. Even if Monsters were a danger to humans, as long as the situation didn’t change, Kagami did not care.

Essentially, 【It doesn’t matter to him, whether he gets defeated or he defeats them.】

“...S-such reasoning!”

Despair, anger, scorn, a sense of defeat, and various other emotions welled up inside of Rex. As strong as he was, he couldn't do anything against Kagami.

He also had nothing he could say. He had claimed that the reason for his strength was that a Hero's existence was needed to fight the Demon King, but a Villager had appeared and made him look foolish.

Kagami had stolen the words "Pride is human nature" from Rex.

As Kagami passed Rex, he whispered at a low volume, only loud enough for Rex to be able to hear him:

"You still don't know this world's System."

Rex didn't understand the meaning of these words. He looked at Kagami, trying to figure out his intentions...and became speechless.

Kagami was wearing a sorrowful expression, as if he was in despair from knowing everything...even though he had claimed to be uninterested. What did he know, and what had made him make such a face?

What did he know to be able to reach his Level?

Rex stopped listening because he was too afraid to know.

"By the way...although the Royal Family is the owner of the Holy Sword..."

Krul asked the question that she considered most important as Kagami tried to leave the room. He stopped and bowed at a 90 degree angle.

"I'm sorry, but I didn't mean to do that."

Kagami, who had thought about leaving if things went well, instantly apologized.

Part 9

“Is this...a theft of the Royal Family’s heirloom?”

“No, but...it’s not an exaggeration to say that the sword dropped in the Dungeon.”

“But the Royal Family considers this room to be a secret warehouse.”

Kagami’s forehead began to drip with sweat, as a retort rose up in his thoughts. “Who cares you damn idiot! It wasn’t made inside the Dungeon!”

It was an outrageous crime to steal things from the Royal Family. The Royal Family’s Princess being right in front of him made Kagami feel anxious.

As expected, with a member of the Royal Family in front of him, he couldn’t say, “Don’t put your possessions in a Dungeon like this, where anyone can accidentally enter and take it! It would be safer in the castle!”

“Well...it’s fine if it gets replaced, right?”

“That sword is priceless.”

Shut up! Although I had a merchant appraise it to confirm the price of the item, I idiotically sold that sword for just 300 gold. I feel like crying...

However, Kagami couldn’t protest because he couldn’t afford being labeled as a criminal.

Among the people who served as the Imperial City’s Magicians, there were some who could use magic to brand criminals.

Normally if you killed people or committed other crimes, you would be branded as a criminal and your Status Window would automatically be dyed red. However, people from the Imperial City could testify on your behalf.

On the other hand, if the Imperial Magicians marked the Status Window with a skull and crossbone, you would be denied access to all facilities in the country, be ruined, and chased out of the Imperial City.

People with faded crossbone marks could return to the Imperial City and show that they had atoned, getting a remission displayed on their Status Window. However, this would also cripple that person for life.

For Kagami, whose only goal was to enjoy his life, this was fatal.

“Well...what can I do to have this overlooked?”

Kagami, who was the quickest to respond, looked at Krul and asked her.

“From the beginning, that Holy Sword is the sword that was made to defeat the Demon King.”

“Meaning?”

“Would you like to join our party and defeat the Demon King together?”

The Demon girl twitched and frowned upon hearing Krul’s words. She scowled at Krul before staring at Kagami with an agitated expression.

Kagami faced her and opened his mouth widely, showing off a wry smile as if it were a genuine one.

“No, thank you.”

Kagami replied clearly, and the Demon girl looked relieved.

“Why!?! If you have that much power, I’m sure you can defeat the Demon King! You don’t seem to be aware of the fact that nobody has ever accomplished this!”

“I don’t know.”

When Krul persistently tried to tempt him to join them, Kagami glared back and replied in a serious tone, as if to intimidate her.

Krul’s body instantly trembled and she was at a loss for words from the aura that did not seem to be from a Villager.

Understanding that it was useless to talk any more, Kagami began to move again.

“Don’t you agree that it will be fine if the Legendary Holy Sword is brought back? Since I’ll go find it again and return it somehow, please forgive me on this matter. I also have some responsibility for being negligent.”

Kagami said this firmly. If you thought about it, since he hadn’t named himself yet, he had no fear of being branded as a criminal. He perceived that he would be able to manage somehow if he got away from this place.

“Why...is that? Do you not want wealth or fame? Do you not want to save people that are suffering?”

“Hmm? I do want wealth, but I don’t really need fame. If there are people suffering...well, I’d save them.”

“T-then, at least you have a reason to fight! If you still say that’s not enough...when the Demon King is defeated, I’ll become your Queen!”

Everyone there let out a surprised “Hah!?” in response to Princess Krul’s unexpected offer.

“W-wait! Princess...are you saying that you will pledge yourself to a Villager!?”

Rex Chickyboy got impatient and lost his temper. Part of his plan had been to finally defeat the Demon King and, after becoming rich and famous, be pledged to the Princess and rule the country.

“Even so, I am still willing to do it. I’ve decided that this Villager is worthy of that much, since his power is so rare.”

Krul spoke normally, since she had come to the decision with her calm judgement. This was the strength of her desire to defeat the Demon King.

Kagami felt her implacable desperation behind her stern, serious expression and was impressed that she thought about others and not herself despite her young age.

“However, I refuse.”

Still, he refused the offer. He had only been impressed.

Although it was not a bad offer for Kagami, whose goal was to gather gold, he had a policy of never replying “Yes” to such requests.

He wasn’t worried about somebody defeating the Demon King, since he expected the Demon King to be defeated eventually. However, agreeing to defeat the Demon King himself was a different matter.

“Please...tell us the reason.”

“First of all, you are fundamentally mistaken.”

“A misunderstanding?”

Everyone concentrated on listening to the seemingly irritated Kagami, who proceeded to explain thoroughly.

“I don’t really think that the Demon King subjugation is an achievement. That is the reason that I won’t help you fight. That’s all. By the way...since these are only my opinions, you don’t have to worry about it.”

“I don’t understand...what you’re saying.”

Everyone else shared Krul’s feelings. They could not understand what he was saying.

Nobody had ever completed a Demon King subjugation. The Demon King was the largest cause of the production of Monsters, and removing such a danger would be a huge achievement for humans.

“Well, it’s fine if you don’t understand. Since you don’t understand, it’s nothing bad.”

Kagami finished talking and resumed walking, putting a foot outside of the room.

“Please wait. Even if you leave, I won’t be satisfied with not understanding. Although I understand that you are incredible, at least tell us the reason that you won’t fight the Demon King.”

Palna finally spoke, genuinely concerned. She had chosen the path of fighting to enjoy a fun life while obtaining wealth and fame, but this Villager did not seem to have the same desire for power.

“Good grief. It’s difficult to try and explain it. It doesn’t mean that you guys are mistaken, so ain’t it fine if you ignore me? There’s no point unless you realize it yourself.”

“At least...just a hint...”

Next, the timid Tina asked a question. The moment Kagami looked back at her, her body trembled and she tried to look away with an “eek!”.

“What has the Demon King done to humans? What have humans done to the Demon King?”

After Kagami finally answered, he left the glowing room and disappeared into the darkness of the dimly lit cave.

Everyone left inside puzzled over the mysterious words that he had left them.

Things the Demon King had done to humans? The Demon King spawned Monsters, which brutally murdered countless numbers of people. Things humans had done to the Demon King? They tried to kill the Demon King in order to release the people from their suffering. That was all. That was the only reason.

As for whether it was funny or there was a reason not to fight, they couldn’t understand it at all.

The Villager had also said that “It doesn’t mean that you guys are mistaken.”

It wasn’t a mistake to try to defeat the Demon King. However, it wasn’t an achievement either. It wasn’t a reason to fight with the Demon King. It wasn’t a reason to obtain wealth and fame?

“No more! I don’t understand it! What is that guy!”

Tina was unable to understand the reason and puffed her cheeks in response.

“That Villager...is probably a Villager who is stronger than any other Role.”

Whether or not she felt depressed with those unbelievable remarks, Palna sighed and stated her thoughts. She then noticed that Rex was glaring at the entrance of the room.

“Rex? What’s wrong? Staring at the entrance of the room like a beast...if it’s about the Villager from earlier, I am fairly certain that he isn’t in this area anymore?”

“That guy...when he passed me, he said something strange.”

Krul, who was slightly depressed from being rejected, showed interest in Rex’s words.

“What...did he say?”

“You...still don’t know the System of this world’ ...is what he said.”

“Sys...tem?”

When they heard this, the mystery of the Villager grew.

“That person...what exactly does he know?”

“I don’t know, but one thing is clear.”

Rex responded to Krul, who had put a hand on her chin while staring at the doorway that the Villager had left through. He began to walk towards the cave’s darkness, just like the Villager had, with resolve.

Certainly, he did not know the System of this world. If that was the case, then it would be fine if he learned about this System...and surpassed that Villager. It was impossible for a Villager to be able to do something that he could not.

Things like the Holy Sword didn’t matter anymore. Now, there was something inside him...a reliable power that didn’t need such things.

The absolute confidence to take down the Demon King...to gain this power. He could do it. He definitely could.

“I...must become the strongest of them all!”

A burning desire to obtain the power to surpass the Level 999 Villager lit up inside of him, as if it had become his new obsession.

CHAPTER 2

SUCH THINGS, WHAT VALUE DO THEY HAVE?

Part 1

When Kagami first defeated a Green Slime at the age of 2, he wondered one thing.

“I wonder why these things contain gold?”

However, this doubt that Kagami held instantly vanished. In this world, it was common sense. A natural phenomenon.

No, if anything, he might have thought that way because he was two years old.

With the existence of common magic spells, Kagami’s doubt vanished before he had even realized it.

Ever since then, Kagami continued to defeat Green Slimes. He made sure to always fight them individually, throwing stones at them, digging pit traps, and occasionally sending them flying, while trying not to get poisoned. He steadily gained experience through stone throwing.

However, there was a limit to the experience he could gain from Green Slimes. Kagami defeated Green Slimes everyday and reached Level 3 in a month.

His next target was a monster that lived near the Green Slimes and the village in great numbers, the Moss Goblins.

It had a boar-like appearance and a body covered in green skin, which increased its eerie appearance. It was a malicious monster that would charge and bite its targets. Kagami had been hesitant to strike a blow against it, but, after becoming Level 3, his body felt lighter than ever and his powerup gave him the confidence to challenge it.

From his point of view, it was easy to defeat them. He defeated all the nearby Green Slimes, but the main objective was to see if he could defeat Moss Goblins. He would

die from a single bite, and if they had acted as a group, they would have charged him separately and he would have probably died.

However, he fought them one at a time so that he didn't have to risk such a situation. He avoided their charge, kicked them from behind, and threw stones at them, easily defeating them.

About a year after he started killing Moss Goblins, Kagami reached Level 4. However, he was only Level 4, because Moss Goblins were Level 4 and he could not get any higher, no matter how many more he defeated.

When Kagami thought about what his next step forward would be, he realized that he would need to defeat Monsters that were at least one Level higher. When taking into account the weak Monsters around the village, the next Monsters were Level 7 Goblins.

Maybe, with the adult's advice, it would not be so dangerous to fight Level 7 Goblins immediately? Kagami had always thought that way and he decided to fight with the Goblins, since he would be unable to raise his level for a long time if he did not.

He had fought and defeated Moss Goblins without getting hurt for a year, so surely he would be able to manage Goblins as well. Kagami approached the Goblins like a hawk and attacked them before understanding why the adult Villagers tried not to fight these Monsters.

The answer was very simple; the risk of death was too high.

The green monsters had a figure similar to humans and would bite with their large mouths if they approached you, just like the Moss Goblins. Kagami would definitely die if he did not use good tactics.

He kept his distance and launched attacks from far away, but because they were armored, they took no damage at all. Despite this, long ranged attacks were beyond them...until they began to imitate the rock throwing.

The stones that the Goblins threw disappeared from his view, and one hit and injured Kagami's right shoulder.

If the trajectory had been slightly shifted and the rock had hit his head, Kagami would have been killed instantly.

Since he had luckily avoided attacks from Green Slimes and Moss Goblins, this was the first time he truly understood that if he was hit with a single blow, he would have died immediately.

How unfortunate was the existence that was called a Villager? He ran for his life, towards the village, and after seeing the Level 10 Warrior who was staying as a guest defeat the Goblins, Kagami completely understood.

Kagami, who witnessed this overwhelming difference of Status, once again remembered a feeling that he had long since forgotten.

“What exactly...are Roles?”

He questioned the common sense behind the natural things and existences in this world.

Kagami was struck by an unspeakable, inexplicable sensation. However, he could not find the answer. Roles were given to people at their birth, and despite the efforts of the many people who tried to find an answer, there was no answer for them to find. Instead of recognizing this doubt as a wall, Kagami just ignored it.

However, he did not give up. Since a Level 10 Warrior could defeat them, if he could fight with the power of a Level 10 Warrior, even if he was a Villager, he would be able to defeat Goblins.

Normally, when one realized this fact, it was expected for them to give up, but Kagami did not. He did not want to admit it. If he was born as a Villager, he would continue to live as a Villager.

The risk of death was abnormally high, but Kagami didn't plan to be burdened with a risk of death. Therefore, he would not take revenge when he became stronger than he was now.

However, even if he thought about wanting to become strong, he could only raise his Status through meager muscle training, such as doing push ups. If he really wanted to become strong, there was no other option but to raise his Level.

If he wanted to raise his Level, there was no other way other than defeating Goblins.

He could not see a way through his dilemma. Even if he struggled and tried to defeat Goblins, he could not do it by himself.

He couldn't request the cooperation of the other Villagers, since they obviously would not want to die. Also, there was no reason for Kagami, who was still a child, to go out and exterminate Monsters. It was useless to try and hire a Warrior to help him Level Up because he was a child and had no gold. Those were the reasons for his dilemma.

Thus, he was unable to find a way out of his helpless reality, no matter how much he tried. This was the situation when Kagami turned 7 years old.

When he had just turned 7, Kagami was still at Level 4. Although his Status had grown slightly, there wasn't a significant change.

At 7 years old, he hired a Warrior that was staying in the village and headed towards the Imperial City on a carriage, in order to deliver clothes that had been made at his parent's tailor shop.

They were attacked by Monsters and Kagami's father, who was right in front of him, was killed, drenched in his own blood.

The tale of the existence that called himself Kouji Kagami began that day.

Part 2

“Wow...it’s so cold outside. I want to go back quickly so I can have dinner and sleep.”

Kagami had left the Ancient Cave at a brisk pace, as if he was halfheartedly fleeing from the Hero’s party. He was happy to see that the moon had come out and it had become dark outside.

“The night has a subtle chill. I wonder if I should have planned to go back before it got dark. All right! Let’s go home.”

Kagami placed the Quest form that had 30 Monsters Slain written on it into his bag as he spoke to himself, and began to walk towards Balman City while humming a tune.

“W-wait a moment! Are you trying to leave m-me behind so blatantly?”

The horned girl grasped the hem of Kagami’s clothes in a panic.

Kagami gripped the hem of his clothes and, after glancing at the beautiful red-headed girl, resumed walking without much hesitation.

“Wait! Wait! Why aren’t you stopping for me?!”

“Well, it’s because I’m not a lolicon. I’m not someone who would love a girl who is young enough to be my daughter. I love sexy and busty older women.”

The girl, stunned, let out an “Eeeh”, while Kagami felt embarrassed from describing his own tastes.

“That’s your problem! Why did you save me? I’m a Demon...don’t you know?”

“Because it seemed like you were going to be killed.”

The girl couldn’t hide her surprise at Kagami’s natural assertion. Surely there wasn’t such a human. Neither Demons nor Humans would believe that someone like that existed.

Still, the existence in front of her was out of the ordinary. He was not only a Villager, but also at Level 999.

“I only saved you. I don’t know what you will do from here. It’s fine if you act freely, since you came to the Ancient Cave by yourself. You’re a Demon so you won’t even need an escort, will you?”

“W-Wait! I have things I want to ask.”

The girl looked desperate, so Kagami stopped walking and listened.

“Earlier, you said that you don’t have any plans to defeat the Demon King. Is that true?”

The girl said while looking up fearfully at Kagami, as if she were a small puppy being scolded.

“I don’t. It doesn’t matter who defeats the Demon King.”

“The Demon King won’t get defeated but...you say that it doesn’t matter. Then, why did you save me, who is also a Demon? I don’t understand the meaning of your actions.”

“Wouldn’t you understand that best, since you’re a Demon?”

The moment she heard these words, she began to suspect that the man in front of her was the existence that she and her father had been seeking for many years.

Maybe, just maybe, Humans and Demons were equal beings in his eyes. This man...knew. He was aware of it. This is what the girl began to think.

She was almost correct. Apart from Kagami, the Demon King was the only other one who knew that the Demons were more than monster spawners. However, it was also true that they were harming humans.

Fundamentally, the purpose of their existence was to be an enemy of humans. Thus, there was no reason to complain even if someone tried to defeat the Demon King.

This was just how things were.

“I’ll change the question. Why didn’t you try to kill me?”

“Isn’t it because you haven’t particularly done anything to me?”

“Aren’t I a Demon? An existence solely meant to spawn Monsters...an enemy of humans.”

“It can’t be helped that you do such a thing, right? You can’t be a cockroach, since you can communicate like humans. Besides, aren’t you guys the only ones who can spawn Monsters? That is rather convenient.”

When she heard those words, the girl was convinced. This man was the existence that she and her father had been searching for.

As soon as she confirmed this, she walked up to the man in front of her, who was yawning as if annoyed, and bumped into him with all the strength of someone who was serious and determined.

“I-I want you to marry me!”

“Yea, maybe after a million years.”

“Sh-...shut up. At most, in 5 years. I’ll become glamorous, just like you want!”

She felt tense, as if her heart had ruptured, and she told him as if she was prepared to die. Kagami, far from being fazed, returned a seemingly carefree answer.

“Are you an idiot? It is not necessarily okay for a Demon brat to say that she will become a glamorous woman and propose out of the blue in this world, where Demons and Humans are mortal enemies, not to mention that not even ten minutes have passed since we first met. It’s like a scene out of a manga. Is this something that you want?”

“N-No! I have a proper reason for it! I have been searching for a human like you!”

“Don’t lie to me! It’s obvious that we’ve just met, right!? You even followed me to ask something, even though I had planned to separate immediately. Besides, what were you planning to do with the Holy Sword inside the cave?”

The girl hesitated, but she trusted the Villager's declaration that he had no intention of defeating the Demon King despite being Level 999, and she opened her mouth after making eye contact with him.

"My father is sick...and I heard rumors about new Heroes going on a journey to try to get the Legendary Holy Sword. If the Heroes appeared with it, I think even my father...would probably be killed, so that's why...I came to destroy the Holy Sword before they could take it."

"That's a fully loaded, amazing joke right there. How did you know about the location of the Holy Sword?"

"It was written inside an ancient book in the archives."

The girl said, while gesturing to try to convince him that she had searched desperately.

"...Archives? I mean, you did say your father is sick...If there wasn't a Holy Sword that the Heroes could use, wouldn't he still win even if it's a mild illness?"

"No, it's a serious one. Dad says he can only use 50% of his power."

"Can't he win using 50%? Isn't it fair to treat the Heroes as nothing more than a waste of paper? Who is your father?"

"Umm...he is someone that's called demonic...that is, the Demon King."

"Oho."

He felt contempt for her. Even though she thought that he might become hostile, the girl answered while squirming her body around, as if she was having a hard time speaking.

Part 3

“For the Demon King to have fallen ill...I mean, is he that weak, that Pops?”

“That Pops’ ...you know my father?”

“Wouldn’t everyone know the Demon King? I met him in the past, though it’s not like I care about that sort of thing anymore.”

“N-Not in the least! I have never heard of a human returning alive after meeting my father!”

Kagami couldn’t tell whether she didn’t want to recognize such a person or she was just happy that he had stayed there. She closed in on him, as if she was examining him, while her eyes sparkled happily.

“From the beginning, I hadn’t gone to kill that Pops. I just went to go meet him...like nine years ago? Which reminds me, how old are you? 10 years? Rather, what’s your name?”

“I’m 13, how rude! My name is Alice, Alice Balnesio. What about you?”

“I am Kagami Kouji, 23 years old. Which means...when I went to the Demon King’s Castle, you were there, right?”

Alice shook her head in answer to Kagami’s words.

“Since the Demon King’s Castle was dangerous, I lived in a village away from the Demon King’s Castle...That’s probably why we have never met.”

“Hmm...your Mother?”

“Not here. She passed away when I was born. I lived together with my relative’s aunt.”

Kagami lightly apologized with “My condolences.” It was likely that he was convinced. Since the Demon King was always targeted by humans, it would be dangerous for him to live with other Demons.

“And? Why are you and the Demon King looking for a human like me? Though you’ve already said it, is it because I’ve met with the Demon King once before?”

“I first began to search for a human like Kagami one year ago, but around the same time that my search began, my father fell ill...I didn’t have time for him.”

“At the time that he met me, I didn’t really think about it. It would seem I’m the person you’re looking for...and?”

“I want to walk down the path of coexistence with humans.”

After letting out a big sigh, Kagami started to walk again.

“It’s impossible. Give up.”

He declared just like that, as if to treat her coldly.

“Why!”

“If it’s this person, I’m sure he will comply.” Alice had thought this, so she shouted towards the leaving Kagami with a slightly annoyed look.

“In terms of us getting temporarily married, so fuckin’ what. I would immediately be called a traitor by the Humans. It’s useless as long as you guys have those horns.”

“But! Apart from spawning Monsters...we won’t change anything!”

“That’s the biggest problem.”

Humans hated Monsters. Demons produced Monsters. Even if Demons didn’t do anything, Monsters would attack humans. If that happened, there would be a chain reaction that would make humans hate Demons.

Even if Demons lived far away from Dungeons, there was a respawn point to produce Monsters. Magic emanated from the horns lingered in the air, and even though most of it dissipated naturally, the remains would get absorbed by the respawn point and a Monster would be produced.

“In the beginning, I too had thought that Demons were an existence that had to be defeated without reservation. Even if you understand that you won’t do anything to Humans, it won’t change anything. Humans will still say that ‘They must be defeated.’”

“Is it because...Monsters are produced?”

“Yes. Aren’t there a lot of humans who think that besides me? There are also people who will continue to say that they will beat Demons to death, even after understanding it.”

Alice sat down, losing power after listening to Kagami. It was unexpected. She had thought that if there was a place where Demons and Humans could coexist happily...the life of Demons would no longer be targeted.

When Kagami saw Alice like this, he returned to her side while letting out a sigh, as if he was unable to bear it any more.

“Well, the Demon King might be thinking of some other methods. First, aren’t there any relatives that can start to figure it out somehow?”

“Relatives? What do you mean by that?”

“It’s about whether or not all of the Demons think about wanting to get along with humans. What about that?”

When she heard Kagami’s words and saw that he had noticed something, Alice looked regretful and bit her lips.

“Right? Due to the history of the long breakdown between humans and Demons, they both hate each other to the extent of wanting to kill. You and the Demon King are rare. Both sides hate each other. If you say things like wanting to coexist with humans, wouldn’t the Demons also treat you as a traitor?”

“Then why doesn’t Kagami look like he’s trying to kill Demons?”

When Alice asked her question, Kagami looked as if he had thought of something and immediately turned around, forcing a moan. “Well—,”

“‘Cause I’m an idiot...”

That was the only thing he muttered. When Alice saw his back, surrounded by an atmosphere of sadness, she didn't want to question him any further.

Although I don't understand it well, perhaps this is the belief he holds. It doesn't matter if Demons get killed, but he won't kill them. If one looks like they are dying in front of him, he will protect them. The more she thought, the more ambiguous the existence who called himself Kagami became. Alice began to feel slightly attracted to him.

"And? How long will you continue to follow me? We will be arriving at the town soon."

After about 50 minutes, Kagami, who had declared himself as an idiot, arrived at the hills that overlooked the huge town of Balman. On the way, Alice had also arrived sneakily, as if he had brought her along.

Part 4

“Umm....Well, I have a favor to ask.”

Alice acted as if she planned to stay hidden, only showing her face from behind a tree while muttering as if she was restless.

“In order to cure father’s illness...I want to go buy some medicine.”

“What medicine?”

“Somebody told me that there’s a rumor of the Quest Guild selling Spirit Protection medicine... I want to buy this.”

“That’s ten gold, do you have money?”

“T-Ten gold!?”

Alice, who had no more than 500 Silver, looked shocked when she heard that absurd price.

The Spirit Protection medicine was reasonably priced, considering it’s effects. It was a type of medicine that affected many symptoms, including cold, poison, curse, petrification, vitality, stamina, strength, aging, beautification, and even backaches.

Even if a small fraction of nobles use it, it doesn’t matter whether or not they use it once a year, it is still a precious item.

“It’s useless. I can’t see you holding it.”

“Umm... Well, the gold... please lend it to me.”

Although Alice said this guiltily, Kagami furrowed his brows with a look on his face that said “What the hell is she saying.”

“There aren’t villagers who would lend lots of gold to buy the medicine for the Demon King. There’s no obligation for me to go that far. It’s too bad the Demon King became sick. He’s bound to be defeated.”

Kagami declared while pointing his index finger at Alice, and Alice's expression darkened.

Seeing her change, Kagami reflected on what he said because saying 'the Demon King is bound to be defeated' to his daughter was too much.

"It's impossible for father to die....If he dies then all of the Demons would be at risk. This isn't just our problem!"

Immediately after, Alice cried while she faced him with pleading eyes.

Seeing this situation, Kagami listened with a troubled expression.

"Now that Father is becoming a target of the Humans with his enormous magic power, although they haven't tried to go look and kill other Demons besides him, if father passes away.....!"

"Ah-...Well, that is true."

Even if Monsters are defeated, they won't all disappear. Since Monsters only spawn through the casted magic of Demons, it's not directly caused by the Demon King.

If the Demon King who conceals an abnormally huge amount of magic is defeated, perhaps next time humans might start to blame Demons who live in various regions for the cause of non-existent Monsters.

So long as the Demon King, who was said to be too powerful of an opponent, wasn't killed, the other Demons could live without being targeted by humans, even if they didn't want to help him.

And Demons who understand this aren't many. Since the Demon King's Castle is dangerous, putting their residence in a separate location is good proof of it.

"But... Without a doubt this is a problem that will occur sooner or later. The Demon King will die some day. He will be brought to an end some day."

Kagami had understood this. He had left everything up to chance to his understanding. He had given up since it was something that was completely unavoidable.

A Demon's life expectancy isn't everlasting. They grow old and die the same as humans do.

The Demon King is no exception, and even though he is 'the' Demon King, he is only one of the several generations of Demon Kings.

Kagami knew this. And if there were no successors, the overwhelming existence that's known as the Demon King would no longer be in this world.

"I... won't give up. At the very least if he were to be opposed, if there is still a slight chance of hope, I want to cling to it."

Looking at Alice clenching her teeth, Kagami felt faintly nostalgic.

For Alice, perhaps this possibility tied in with her father's life. Kagami had started to somehow guess her real intention about wanting to walk down the path of coexistence.

"You, do you not detest humans?"

To confirm whether or not this was correct, Kagami asked such a question.

"Even if I resent them nothing will start. 'Cos I'm in the same boat as you."

Listening to these words, Kagami unintentionally slacked his cheeks, spat out his breath, and began to laugh.

"W-Why are you laughing!"

"No....Since you are capable of thinking that way, I remember that the Demon King also tried to aim for the path of coexistence."

"The Demons don't want to lose the Demon King because exposing him is dangerous," a statement that doesn't hold truth. Kagami was convinced as such while listening to Alice.

If the Demon King dies, the Demons will become targeted. Of course if Demons were assassinated without reason, it would probably lead to a war between humans and

Demons. He doesn't know how long this peace will continue for. No matter if one side continues till nobody is left, it will lead to war.

Although some of the Demons who were not being targeted no longer wished for war, it would probably begin the moment they lost the Demon King, who was said to be the Great Shield.

"But I think it's impossible to improve the relationship between humans and Demons."

Why did he think so? Because he had already thought about it once before.

Although he had thought about it, reality was cruel and he gave up.

He also thought about other methods, but it was clear that he had to give it up.

However the girl in front of him is not giving it up. Since he had given up once already, she is making an effort to try and make it a reality. And this Demon, had come by herself to such a place like this.

In fact, it's more than Demons hating humans, they are killing humans. and likewise, humans are also killing Demons. It was to ensure the safety on each side.

After all, Alice is thinking that humans and Demons are the same. Since she is thinking about being able to co-exist, "we are in the same boat" comes to mind. Kagami had thought as much.

And he had guessed it correctly.

"Even if it's impossible now, I might find a way someday, so I won't give up."

"Sure, I'll try my best without giving it up. If it's medicine you want I'll buy it for you."

That's why Kagami, like himself, had considered supporting this girl until she gave up the possibility of humans and Demons joining hands someday. Because this way seems more interesting to him.

By some chance, he might be aware of something different. He believed in this possibility.

“I-is that fine? But the gold....”

With a sudden change of heart, as Alice suddenly brightened up, Kagami said so as if he were respectfully apologizing.

“Of course you will receive it? Didn’t you say to ‘lend it’ a little while ago? It will be returned right?”

“Y-Yeah! returning around 10 Gold is affordable, because there’s lots of gems inside the castle, it’s fine if I go get it.”

“Well since you will go get it, make it 15 Gold.”

“Eh! Isn’t that increased by 5 Gold?”

“It can’t be helped, otherwise it won’t be worth it. Even if it’s this I’m still giving you a big service aren’t I?”

Although Alice had been surprised by the extraordinary figure, it was in fact a big help to her.

It takes about 10 days to go to the Demon King’s Castle and return back to Balman town. And it’s normal for Kagami to earn about 5 Gold in that amount of time.

“It’s a safe option to escort you along the way to the Demon King’s Castle. C’mon, it’s cheap.”

“Uu..... though father might get mad at me later, it’s fine. Since the gems were left in storage I think it’s fine.”

“Yosh, now that it’s been decided first we need to go to Balman city to buy the medicine, look, hurry it up Alice.”

After Kagami finished saying so, he continued walking towards Balman.

After she had her name called abruptly, Alice, who was staring blankly, immediately smiled as if she were trembling with joy.

“Yeah! Please take care of me, Kagami-san!”

At least Demons, although it's a fact they were called with names by humans, a girl named Alice was the first one who was inspired with hope of that possibility.

Previously, an existence that was said to be a Monster took his father's life, and the 7 year old Kagami at that time bore a grudge against Demons who produce these existences, and hated them for it. From the bottom of his heart he had thought about wanting to kill all of them.

Part 5

However, the one he hated the most, to the point of rage, was himself. The reality was that his body was too powerless. If he had been stronger, his father wouldn't have died and he wouldn't have fled by himself, failing his clumsy father.

"Stronger. I want to get stronger...!"

This was his hope, but it had been crushed by possessing the Role of Villager.

The one that killed his father was a Level 34 Monster called a Devil Liger. It had purple, devil-like skin and was a formidable enemy. Its hindlegs acted like a spring, enabling it to pounce with overwhelming speed and strike at its enemies with its sharp fangs. It was something he couldn't compete with even if he struggled against it.

Even though it was necessary to become stronger to defeat this Monster, it was impossible for Villagers who could not become stronger than the wall that was known as Goblins.

He didn't know what to do with the anger rising up inside of him. Why was he born as a Villager? Why IS it a Villager? He had no way to relieve his anger, so Kagami devoted himself to hitting Moss Goblins. At the same time, he became miserable.

Despite how there were Monsters that needed to be defeated, he could not defeat them. In his misery, he continued defeating weaker Monsters, from the safest of places and by the safest of methods.

He couldn't help feeling frustrated. That's why Kagami challenged Moss Goblins in close combat, with the resolve to die.

Due to his deep hatred against monsters, he refused to give up just because he was an inferior existence.

If he wasn't strong enough to win, he would rather be reborn with a different Role, is what Kagami thought.

The equipment he had bought to defeat Monsters, from the money he had earned until now, was: the Leather armor wrapped around his body, a Buckler held in his left hand,

and a sword on his torso that he had never used before. He faced the Moss Goblins with his buckler firmly planted on the ground.

Immediately after, the Buckler was knocked out of his hands. The force of the charge that could not be fully nullified hit Kagami's entire body. He vomited blood and felt massive pain, as if his internal organs had been crushed.

Kagami understood the overwhelming weakness of Villagers once again.

Even though he was at the same Level 4, there was a complete difference in real strength between Moss Goblins and himself.

"...You're fucking kidding me."

Even so, Kagami didn't want to admit it. He didn't want to give up. He was attacked by Moss Goblins again and again as his small body was torn to shreds.

In the end, he exhausted his recovery items and was left semi-conscious, with 10 HP remaining. However, even though one attack was enough to defeat him, Kagami did not give up and defeated the Moss Goblins, turning them into gold.

At this moment, Kagami was wrapped with unspeakable discomfort, causing him to panic. When he opened his Status Window, he shed a single tear.

Even if he defeated Level 4 Moss Goblins, he wouldn't obtain exp, but Kagami's Level had still risen to Level 5. That was when he realized something about this world's system.

【Even if you continue to slay weak enemies, your level won't rise】

【As the name implies, exp is only a numerical value that indicates your combat experience】

【Even if you defeat enemies equal to yourself with the help of a strong person, exp won't be obtained】

【Exp is only given when an enemy is defeated by one who deserves obtainable exp】

There was a loophole in these four rules. No, should it be said that the Roles were created in order to fill this hole?

Exp would not be obtained even if you continued to defeat those of the same Level. This was this world's system, and it was well known. However, there was another way to obtain exp.

One of the exp's system existed within a separate vector, based on the definition of Levels. This was to participate in a higher level battle. However, rather than it being against a higher Level, it referred to the difficulty of combat.

To give a simple example, long range attacks were overwhelmingly strong against Moss Goblins, since they couldn't attack with long range. If one continued to attack them at long range, they wouldn't become a higher level.

When one faced an opponent that was superior in close combat and challenged them at close range, it would be established as a more difficult battle.

Would any Role besides the Villager fight a battle against Monsters of the same Level while limited to a 【Role】's weakness? The answer would probably be no. That was why no one had learned of this system until now.

No one else would fight such an unfavorable battle.

If they fought an unfavorable battle, it would only be against Monsters of a higher level. Forming a party to fight together would compensate for that disadvantage. They would become stronger by getting exp from the Level gap.

For magicians, if they challenged Monsters of the same level with their fists, perhaps they could earn this exp. However, would such a person challenge that kind of disadvantageous battle? Was it worth risking their lives, despite their higher chance of victory when utilizing magic?

It wasn't much of a level up if one became ragged in the first place.

This ragged Role was the overwhelmingly disadvantageous Villager; the Role that was most easily able to gain this exp and also had the highest risk of death.

Although it was expected that the Villager would grow faster than any other Role, it was still a Role that had a high risk of death associated with that growth.

That was the Villager.

“Haha.....hahahahahahaha! Ahahahaha!”

When he noticed this, Kagami laughed gloriously and smiled mischievously.

It had been prepared. The fate of the Villager was set to a path of bloodshed.

It was a new field that had opened up to him because he was a Villager, and it was a great benefit that he could obtain because he was a Villager. Kagami continued to laugh as though he was a broken doll.

“I’ll do it...I’ll kill them. Monsters, Demons too...I’ll kill them all!”

From then on, Kagami continued to fight, risking death every day, to the extent that it could be said that he had lived an implacable life.

He continued to do this every day, as if he was completely obsessed and couldn’t do anything else. He would fight until his HP dropped to 10, fleeing when he was at death’s door, and steadily earned exp.

It was simple. He fought with his life on the line, not caring if he was defeated or not.

He played with opponents who were capable of freezing people by exploiting their fear, even to the extent of losing their life. There wasn’t a single day where Kagami was not near death.

“I did it...finally, I finally did it!”

The day Kagami turned nine, he successfully killed the Monster, Devil Liger, that had killed his father.

Kagami, who was Level 53, made full use of his equipped Dagger and took down the three Devil Ligers surrounding him without dying.

Kagami’s hands trembled and he was joyous enough to cry out. At the same time, he cherished the feeling of hope. If he continued like this, it would not just be Devil Ligers.

Surely, even the Demon King would be defeated by him, instead of the Hero. This was what he had begun to think.

That's right, in the beginning, it was nothing more than revenge for his father. Back then, it was the prologue to the eradication of Demons and Monsters. No longer did Kagami fear death. He would go as far as he could go, and he didn't care what would become of him later. Yes, these were his thoughts.

However, before he finally took his revenge, he decided to report to his mother, who had always supported him in his reckless endeavors. Kagami hurried back to the village after defeating the Devil Liger...but he did not arrive at his house. His house was not there.

The village had been reduced to rubble by a bandit attack.

Originally, it was a village in a remote region, far away from the Imperial City. Therefore, there had been no attacks by bandits in the past. Additionally, since the village wasn't wealthy, perhaps they wouldn't have been attacked...and only a select few people could be hired as escorts.

The result was that his mother was killed by humans.

Kagami, who had arrived at the village, sat down on the spot, lacking the energy to do anything. He had focused too much on his training and hadn't thought about the possibility of a situation like this happening. If he was to pass by as a guard, with no equipment or earned money...regrettably, at this late hour, he could only gaze at his mother's corpse, stunned.

The father he respected was killed by Monsters.

The mother he revered was killed by humans.

Staring at his mother's corpse, many thoughts began to swirl around in his head. Why had it become like this? Was it fine for him to be depressed at this? Were there no other methods to avoid this?

Then Kagami remembered the first time he had defeated a Green Slime. It was then that he remembered that he could do something about this. In fact, that was the answer to everything that had happened here.

“I’m...such an idiot.”

These were the last words Kagami muttered in that village.

Part 6

“Well then, we’ve almost arrived at Balman...Where should we go first, Alice-san?”

A great wall surrounded Balman’s perimeter, and a gate became visible to Alice and Kagami as they approached from the wide forest. Alice immediately walked along the shadows of the trees to stay hidden.

“No, well...I’m a Demon. I’ll be exposed because of the magic my horns release if I enter. That’s why I’ll wait here until Kagami-san buys the medicine.”

Alice said with a dry smile, as if she was slightly hesitant.

“Are you an idiot? Isn’t that like you’re declaring ‘Please find me hiding in front of the town and kill me’? If this was going to be the case, I would have left you behind when I said that I would go buy the medicine.”

“But, there’s no other way...”

“Don’t make such a gloomy face. Besides, since I plan to return home and rest first, I can’t leave you alone outside, can I?”

Kagami began to rummage around inside the bag that was hanging over his shoulders, searching for something.

After a while, he muttered “Ah, I’ve got it” and removed a white cloth that looked like a slender bandage. He moved over to Alice’s hiding spot in a tree’s shadow.

“Kagami-san...what is this?”

“Don’t worry about it. Remove your hood and turn your head towards me.”

“Eh, eh? L-like this?”

Alice removed her hood with a dubious face. Kagami coiled the bandage around her horns, tying a tight ribbon around each one.

“Good! The horns’ shape doesn’t really stand out, since they decline downwards. Well, since it’s going to be an ornament used to deceive people, I’ll buy you a ribbon later.”

“It can’t be helped, but wrapping them like that...The way the cloak has been torn still...Huh?”

Alice became aware of her discomfort as she was talking. She no longer felt the magic that normally emanated from her horns. She confirmed that the horns were still there by touching them with her hands.

“Kagami-san, what is the meaning of this?”

“Magic.”

“Geez, answer me seriously! If you have such an item, even the co-existence of Demons and humans...!”

“It’s impossible. Although I think you’ve already noticed it, this isn’t 『Magic Suppression』. It’s a special cloth that 『changes magic into a different substance』. I made it.”

Kagami said, before starting to walk briskly towards Balman. The panicked Alice quickly followed him.

A Demon’s horn was a part of their body that emitted magic. It existed in order to stop magic from overflowing within their bodies.

For example, after the Blue Devil’s horn is placed in a container that can store it, the emitted magic temporarily stays in that spot...but magic power still builds up inside the Demon’s body, which can cause abnormal status.

“That’s why I said that it’s useless. There simply isn’t enough raw materials for it. It’s a miracle that I even found them.”

When Alice heard this, she felt dejected.

“Then, at least tell me exactly what this is.”

“N-...? Monsters absorb magic and then release it, right? Then, do you know the origin of that existence? Those guys that are known as Spawn Blockers.”

“Yeah, I know.”

“About that, no matter how many times you locate and destroy those Blockers, the magic isn’t completely destroyed when it’s released inside the Dungeon...I found this material the moment they released their magic. When their magic gets absorbed, it becomes a strange material that won’t release magic, no matter what the Monster is.”

“It doesn’t lose its efficiency?”

Originally, Spawn Blockers who produced monsters lost this efficiency with their destruction and just turned into stone. However, since the Spawn Blockers released their magic when they got destroyed, humans had already given up on the possibility of destroying them.

“Yeah. Those are super S-rank materials no one knows about. I found them by accident.”

“So this was made by kneading them into a cloth material? Shouldn’t you cherish it? It’s the only one in the whole world.”

Alice was slightly worried about what to do. Meanwhile, Kagami, having seen the cloth taken out after such a long time, reminisced about the feelings of finding it for the first time.

It was a cherished feeling that Kagami found. It wasn’t something he found great joy in, but it was a normal doubt for anyone who had thought...

【What...are Monsters?】

“Hey, Kagami-san. Why did you think to try to make this cloth? This is made to easily fit a Demon’s horns, isn’t it?”

“Hmm? Ah, it was just a long time ago.”

When Alice saw Kagami look slightly irritated and scratch his head, she unintentionally let out a laugh. This person might have also aimed for the same world

that she did. No, she was confident that this person would surely try to do so. She smiled and continued to walk behind Kagami until they arrived at Balman.

“A...a...amazingggggg!”

When they arrived at Balman, Alice was astonished and cried out exuberantly with sparkling eyes.

Countless adventurers were often present inside the town and you could see people buying things from open vendors. Tavern workers and owners were out shopping in various places, as well as arranging the goods that they had made.

There were numerous houses covered in bricks or made from wood, wide passages paved in stone, and various Adventurers making speeches at the Square. All of this was new to Alice.

Alice might have been the first Demon to set foot inside of Balman.

“Cheappp! Just for today, we have Humuhumunukunukuāpuaa! 440 Bronze!”

“Cheap! Cheap cheap! Cheap! Cheap! Cheap! Welcome, welcome, it’s cheap!”

“Sea Urchins and Salmon Roe here! 1 Silver!”

“You sure are cute! Won’t you try one of my apples?”

Kagami ignored everything and walked swiftly. Alice looked about restlessly, observing each and every product that she saw as if everything was new to her.

“Hey, be careful!”

“Au, I’m sorry.”

Along the way, Alice collided with an Adventurer who was passing by. Although she seemed like she was pouting while apologizing, the Adventurer didn’t say anything else and walked away.

Although, if he had realized that she was a demon, Alice would have been faced with extremely hostile behavior. That being said, Humans wouldn’t attack you just because

you were rumored to be a Demon. They had conversed like equals, which caused an indescribable feeling to run through her. By the time she noticed, Kagami had jumped in joy.

“Kagami-san, where do we go from here?”

“Hmm? I will go buy the medicine by myself later, so first we will secure an inn to sleep at today. I plan to go call a friend to come join us on this trip.”

Kagami answered without hesitation and made Alice anxious.

“Eh...it won't just be Kagami-san and me going?”

“Isn't it obvious? You don't understand. I'm fine by myself, but since you're here as well, I want someone to stand next to you if I have to fight.”

“B-but...it would be bad if I were to be found out, and isn't it useless for you to worry about me getting attacked by Monsters?”

“It's not necessarily just Monsters who will come and attack you.”

When Alice saw Kagami's sad expression, she couldn't say anything else.

Part 7

“Look, don’t make such a worried face. That guy isn’t bad, I guarantee it.”

Alice followed the calm Kagami as they headed directly towards the inn. After securing a room, Kagami left Alice and went to go search for this person that he relied on.

//

“You’re slow...Kagami-san.”

Alice waited inside the room for about two hours. The room was the length of roughly ten tatami mats, which contained two beds, a table, and chairs placed to allow a view of the whole town from the window.

Although she had considered going outside, that would definitely make Kagami worry, so she sat on the bed to fool around and kill some time while watching the town from the window.

Nevertheless, it was definitely boring to wait in the room for two hours without doing anything. After adapting to a lifestyle of sleeping out in the open during her journey from the Demon village to the Ancient Cave, it would undoubtedly be impossible to sleep in a bed. She would simply feel uncomfortable.

“Oi! Are you awake? Open the door for me!”

Just as she started to feel slightly uneasy, she heard the sound of the three knocks alongside Kagami’s voice coming from the entrance.

Alice’s expression lit up while she jumped out of the bed and went to the door.

“Welcome back, Kagami-san! I’ll open it now!”

Alice turned the key above the door knob counterclockwise enthusiastically and opened the door vigorously.

Then she immediately shut the door and locked it.

The moment the door was opened, Alice became expressionless. She thought that she had seen Kagami standing in front of the door, but there had been someone else behind him. It was a large, muscular man who had hair woven in braids, with a height that was 1.2 times taller than Kagami, he wore a pink dougi and resembled a bear.

“O-i, Alice, it’s me, Kagami. I said to open the door for me.”

The voice she heard was definitely Kagami. Since he had called his name, she decided to properly confirm his identity and once again began to slowly open the shut door.

“It’s Araya...How cute!”

Alice froze in fear from the impact of the person behind Kagami.

The man’s build appeared like a body that’s been born to fight. He had a rugged face with a cleft chin, which was separated into two with applied makeup, and apparently applied a moisturizing agent like lip balm on his cod lips. When Alice saw this figure, she selected the command to flee in her head, but there was no path to escape.

(TN: Cod lips means the lips are very big. Stung-by-a-bee kind of big)

The pink dougi made one think that this man’s appearance belonged to THAT group of people. He was just a completely dangerous fellow with that amount of hardened, ripped muscles.

(TN: The joke is he looks gay)

“Cho, Takako-chan. You’re scaring her so go in first.”

When Alice looked past the large man, she finally saw Kagami and her heart immediately became calm.

“Geez...I’m not scary though~? Young lady, I’m friendly, alright~?”

Kagami felt his appearance lacked any credibility. Alice, who had nearly collapsed in fear, collected herself and closed the door after the large man wearing the pink dougi entered the room.

“Yoisho, look, I went and bought the medicine. I’ll hold onto it so you don’t lose it.”

Kagami muttered to Alice soon after he entered the room. He placed the large rucksack on his shoulders next to the window. He had probably been preparing for the journey.

He then took something that looked like a tea set from the rucksack and prepared a flask with a drink that smelled like black tea. The large man sat in a chair and began to drink elegantly.

“U...umm, Kagami-san? The friend you talked about, is that...this person?”

Alice, who had watched the actions of the two people with a stupefied look, timidly asked Kagami a question.

“Hmm? Yeah? This person is the most reliable Level 124 Monk, Takako-chan.”

Alice was still surprised when she heard that the person was level 124 since their appearance wasn't unique enough for others to expect such a number

Alice believed that he was a Monk, but it was unexpected for Kagami to say that he was the most reliable one.

“Are you listening, Alice-chan? Geez, you really are cute...Want to eat something?”

Alice quickly moved and hid behind Kagami's back without changing her expression.

“I said that you're scaring her. Takako is a good person who is willing to be our ally without any issues, even after knowing that you are a Demon.”

“Eh...! Even though you know I'm a Demon...you aren't scared?”

Alice softened her expression, surprised at Kagami's unexpected remark.

Oddly enough, she felt a sense of affinity with the monk, who wasn't hostile to her even though he knew that she was a Demon.

“I still haven't introduced myself. I'm Takako Vildar. As Kagami-chan said earlier, I'm a Monk. I won't ever attack you just because you're a Demon, so you don't need to worry.”

“W-Why? Aren’t demons a hindrance?”

“Alice-chan is a cute-looking child, and that makes you safe~...Besides, neither Demons nor humans have any relations to me.”

“I too was able to slay Demons in the past, but one time, a long time ago, I exhausted all of my healing medicine and a Demon ended up saving my life...Ever since then, I’ve noticed that Demons and Humans aren’t different.”

Alice widened her eyes and glanced at Kagami and Takako in turns.

“U-Um! I want you to cooperate with me! I want to build a friendly relationship with humans!”

“That’s impossible~. It’s something you cannot understand. After all, Demons won’t stop harming humans. Therefore, I became tired of fighting and now manage Club Gachi Muchi, which lets retired Adventurers enjoy their lives in this town. I’m living a carefree life, no?”

It was during such circumstances when he met Kagami, who had unexpectedly come to play at her bar. He clicked with him and, together with other retired Adventurers, enjoyed quests searching for treasure together. Takako let out a deep sigh.

“I was glad when Kagami came, since he couldn’t come to play recently...However, this unexpected business of wanting to escort a Demon was surprising! If it’s a favor from Kagami, there’s no way I could refuse it, you know.”

“But Takako-chan, you rarely manage the bar anymore.”

“Isn’t it fine if you come to the Club? You can sell things that way.”

“No way. I never want to go to such a horrible place again.”

When she saw the exchange between the two, Alice’s wariness towards Takako gradually faded away.

“Umm...I’m sorry. In the beginning, it was surprisingly strange.”

“Ara! Proper etiquette? It’s fine? Such an appearance...is not overly surprising?”

“I’m in your care, Takako-san!”

Alice bowed to show her sincerity.

“It’s fine? Ah that’s right! Alice-chan has always slept out in the open, right? Don’t you want to take a bath? Shall we go to this city’s hot springs? It’s a good place where there aren’t that many people.”

Alice became excited. Since she had always lived outdoors, she never took any baths.

Although, no matter how many times one bathed, they couldn’t forget the feeling of soaking in warm water.

“Y-Yeah! I want to go! Let Kagami-san go too!”

“If you want to go, then you two should go. Males and females are separated so there is no meaning in going together, right?”

“...Eh? Takako-san will be together with you, right?”

“What the hell are you saying? Takako-chan is a woman.”

At that moment, the vigorous Alice interrupted her thoughts, thinking “Amazing, Kagami-san, to use such magic to stop time!”

“Well...eh? That, like Kagami-san...Takako-san is also big?”

Certainly, she was wearing makeup and a pink dougi. However, no matter what Alice thought, her body was much larger than a normal woman’s.

“But, I’m a woman.”

A chest that tightened with muscles, as if it were an iron plate.

She only had to stand for one to see that her muscles had been forged from training overwhelmingly. It was an appearance that would make one think that it wouldn’t be strange even if she crushed a rock. She was more manly than anyone else.

But she was a woman.

She had arms and legs as thick as logs, along with the appearance of a ferocious bear, and was the Level 124 owner of the Club Gachi Muchi in Balman.

But she was a woman.

“W-w-w-wait a moment! Well, Takako-san has no chest!”

“Takako-chan’s breasts changed into muscle by burning all of her fat.”

Kagami sorted his luggage as he responded, as if he were used to it.

“Geez! Kagami-chan! Don’t you know how to properly choose your words?”

“Haha, stop being so serious Takako-chan. My health is decreasing, right?”

In response to the rude remark, Takako-chan aimed a Low Kick at the back of Kagami’s neck with her log-like legs. A fierce sound rang out when she kicked, lightly shaking the ground.

Although it was impressive that Kagami was enduring it, Alice couldn’t hide her surprise at Takako-san, who had unleashed such a Low Kick. She was...a woman? Alice doubted it expressionlessly.

Part 8

“Umm, even though Kagami-san is Level 999, you still took damage from Takako-san?”

When she saw Kagami’s complexion worsening, Alice suddenly wondered about that. Although Kagami was obviously strong, being at Level 999, she didn’t know if there was enough of a gap compared to Takako, who had the talented Role of the Monk.

“Well, even if I am Level 999, since the Villager is the weakest amongst the Roles, the gap is about three times as much. Otherwise, I think it’s around 1.5 times? If a Villager wants to win against Takako-chan’s power, they need to be at least Level 372.”

Kagami, whose complexion had worsened from taking damage earlier, responded in a cool manner.

“But even so, Kagami’s strength is still overwhelmingly powerful, right? Was being hurt a joke?”

“No. My HP steadily dropped. Look, when you become Level 100, don’t you get an exclusive Race Skill? Takako-san’s skill is especially dangerous.”

Alice was puzzled when she heard this. Demons, who were unlike Humans, weren’t well acquainted with Levels, so Kagami began to explain the Level system step by step.

Upon reaching Level 100, an unknown, exclusive skill was assigned according to a person’s Role, Personality, Character, and their Fundamentals. Since the Skills were apparently determined by a person’s Role, people came to the conclusion that your Role was the primary factor for what was received.

The difference in ability between a Level 99 and a Level 100 Human is immense. When Rex was gathering his party, he had wanted them to be Level 100 because of this.

Furthermore, he knew an exclusive Race Skill was assigned every hundred levels gained. This is why the Level 253 Hero, who called himself ‘The Accomplisher’ is said to be a Legend.

The Demon King, who was stronger than Heroes, also had two exclusive Skills.

It's the skill **【Penetrating Shock of Destruction】** and to put it simply, it allowed one to ignore an opponent's defense.

"Takako-chan releases an all-out attack, dealing her maximum amount of damage. It's an abnormal skill."

Wasn't that a ghost-like attack, which ignored physical attributes? Kagami rose after he finished arranging the luggage.

"So what if it's an abnormal skill? Doesn't Kagami-chan have plenty of them?"

"Is that so? Kagami-san also has exclusive Skills...Huh? Isn't it nine, since you're level 999!?"

Alice was startled and opened her eyes widely as she thought about the amazing power of having nine Skills, having heard about Takako's abnormal Skill.

"No, it's at least ten Skills. When I became Level 999, it increased by one."

"Eh? But didn't you say earlier that one is obtained every 100 Levels?"

"It's probably because there hasn't been anyone who reached Level 999 until now. The limit is Level 999, since the exp bar disappears so you can't get past it."

Kagami muttered with an unhappy expression. Alice couldn't comprehend his thoughts behind his expression. Perhaps he still desired more power? It didn't appear to be that way. People who thought of finding more power after reaching Level 999 didn't exist.

If that was the case, Alice had to wonder "Why does this person show that expression occasionally?" A slight pain appeared in Alice's chest, since she couldn't completely understand what Kagami was feeling.

"Doesn't Alice think that having ten Skills is weird enough? Look, isn't he already fine, even though he was kicked like that earlier?"

"Umm, what kind of Skills does Kagami-san have?"

“It doesn’t mean that I know everything about the skills that were given to me. One looks like an automatic recovery skill and is called 【Auto Revive】 . See, even though I was kicked like that, I’m still alive and well.”

Alice and Takako glanced at Kagami, who looked towards the mirror as if he was set on it.

Even if he was Level 999, suitable hardships would normally be required to overlook the damage he had taken, and it would have been difficult. Kagami’s Skill 【Auto Revive】 , which healed any amount of damage his opponents dealt, was definitely abnormal, but that was because he had reached Level 999.

It was thanks to this Skill he had obtained at Level 100 that Kagami had managed to become Level 999 at a young age.

“Wouldn’t these Skills make others jealous if they are revealed?”

“Isn’t it fine? It can’t be changed anyways. Please show me your Status Window occasionally. Why are you being stubborn and hiding it?”

“ ‘Cause it’s a secret rule.”

Kagami replied as he showed off his Status Window, which only displayed his Role and Level. Seeing this, Takako sighed.

“Whatever. Even though I’m concerned about it, since Kagami-chan is like that, perhaps there is something he doesn’t want us to know about. Alice-chan, let’s go to the bath.”

“A-Alright...”

Alice saw Kagami’s displeased expression, as if he were slightly troubled, and stopped listening. When Kagami looked far off into the distance at times, he had a lonely look on his face, as if he were sad. What exactly did he know about going to that area? Alice left the room while worrying about it.

Even though Takako confirmed the bath selection before leaving the room, Alice didn’t realize it until it was too late. She couldn’t escape anymore.

Alice, who gave up halfway and prepared for the worst, splendidly passed through the streets of Balman under Takako's guidance and headed towards the hot springs. The cheerful Takako was strangely scary.

"Ara? Why such a pale face? Hmph, it's ok, 'cause I'm letting you follow me."

"Ah...no, that...yes. Thank you very much."

"Or, I wonder if it can't be helped but to feel sad at times, since Kagami-chan won't show you his Status Window?"

Alice changed her seemingly sad expression.

Although she thought that the primary reason for his coldness was a tragedy that had occurred in his past, she was still unfamiliar with Kagami.

It was troubling for her to be called by her given name for the first time, as well as seeing humans worry about her.

"Even though he is usually blissfully ignorant, Kagami-chan makes a distressed face when it comes to his Status."

"Does it have something to do with Kagami-san's past?"

"Although his lifestyle of defeating Monsters and obtaining gold hasn't changed at all, he started having that distressed expression when he became Level 999. When I met that child, he was about Level 930 and he had shown me his Status Window back then."

She added "Since I, too, was a normal Bar Owner at that time, I had never shown off such Skills," as she shook her head and pouted.

"...How did Kagami-san reach Level 999, exactly? Nobody could even reach the area of Level 300, and to go beyond Level 999 is..."

If Kagami knew how, anyone would wonder about it, and Alice was the first one to ask this question. She hadn't been listening anyways, when Kagami was near.

Part 9

Even if she tried to listen, Kagami definitely would not tell her. Rather than being strangely deceptive, he'd just wear a troubled expression. Since she intuitively knew this, she didn't dare ask.

"There aren't any monsters that are beyond Level 500 in the world."

Alice stopped and muttered in a small voice.

No matter how much one struggled, Alice was certain that it was impossible to reach that Level. She knew the existence of the strongest monster because Demons coexisted with Monsters. It was not likely for one to return alive if they met it, and it was impossible to flee if they got lost in its territory.

"Surely, one cannot go beyond Level 500. Yet...Kagami reached Level 999."

"But he knew from the beginning that the strongest monsters are Level 500. Also, it's fine to not worry about your father's life being targeted by another Level 999 person, since another person like Kagami is unlikely to appear."

Takako said to Alice, who was genuinely worried about the method of reaching Level 999, with a gentle smile.

"It's probably impossible for anyone other than Kagami-chan."

"Why do you think so?"

"Because for him, every single life is important...I wonder if that makes him the most idiotic person alive?"

Takako began to laugh like a man and added "Hahaha, idiot."

"Besides, isn't that something you will eventually come to know from now on? Since we just met, if you feel that you truly wish to get along with us, it would be better to keep your curiosity reigned in."

Alice slightly reflected on it and lowered her face with a shunned look.

When Takako saw this, she impulsively wanted to hug Alice. She had hugged cute things impulsively in public before, and since it still hadn't caused a problem, she responded as such.

"Well, I'll teach you a special method to becoming Level 999! The exp value is still obtained, even if you are at a higher Level. Kagami-chan verified this already."

"Higher Level?"

"Even if you're at a higher Level, if your opponent's abilities are greater than yours, you will get exp. This isn't normally the case, but since he has the weakest Role of Villager, he can gain exp."

Alice couldn't help but feel even more skeptical when she heard this. Since Villagers were weak, she knew that even if he was fighting a Level 500 Monster at Level 900, he would barely win.

Learning about the existence of Skills convinced Alice even more. The more she thought about it, the more she couldn't help but wonder about the existence that called himself Kagami.

"I, too, don't know about that. But it's fine. Whether it's the past or the present, Kagami-chan is a friendly person who doesn't change. That's why, shouldn't Alice-chan also be at ease?"

Alice, who had been gloomy about various things, brightened at Takako's words.

She couldn't ask too many questions, and even though they had just met, Kagami was friendly. Alice wanted to know more. It was fine if she started learning from now. There was no rush, and they would at least start traveling together.

"And since I'm here, Alice-chan should also feel more at ease."

Alice began to overflow with various feelings when Takako said so.

"I...it's not like I didn't want to go to the hot springs anymore. I just began to think a little, that's all."

“It’s impossible for a girl to be so sweaty! Even if it’s Kagami-chan, I won’t forgive him!”

Takako’s giant body closed in on Alice and pointed at her as she said so. Alice’s heart paled in the face of such force, and she naturally laughed as if she had given up.

“Here we go!...To the hot springs!”

Takako forcibly grabbed Alice’s hand and pointed towards the direction of the hot springs. Immediately after, a giant, violet object fell down in that direction, making a loud “~Dozun”.

“...Huh?”

This height, perhaps it was four times as tall as Takako?

Since it had, by chance, fallen in the largest area in Balman’s town square when nobody was around, there wasn’t anyone under it. Otherwise, it would have pinned anyone underneath it.

Alice was convinced of this when she saw the ground’s paved stone that had been crushed from its fall and gasped.

“Guru.....Gururu.....Guru.....Gurufuu.....”

The monster raised a spine-chilling growl and slowly began to move, emitting a yellow glint from its eyes. Its two front legs sank into the ground with a “~zun”. It then placed its two hind legs in the same manner and pulverized the ground, as if it was getting ready for a charge.

“You’re in the way.”

“Guru.....Ruo!? Buruooooooooo!?”

However, the Bloody Buffer, which had come flying from the sky, immediately received a roundhouse kick to its body from Takako and was sent flying into the horizon at an amazing speed. It made a loud sound as it collided with the Square’s wall of bricks and disappeared, changing into Gold.

“Come, Alice-chan! Let’s go to the hot springs!”

“Oh, no, please wait a moment. Amazing, it’s my first time being bewildered like this.”

Takako, who didn’t appear to be sensitive to anything and immediately tried to go to the hot springs after slaying a Monster that fell from the sky with a sudden roundhouse kick, made Alice dizzy. When they surveyed their surroundings, they realized that there were more Bloody Buffers falling from the sky, one after another.

Why were they still calmly trying to go to the hot springs in such a situation? Alice was rather afraid of this.

“Ara. Quite a lot of them have fallen. Although it’s fine even if they fall on my shop.”

“Takako-san, now is not the time to be calm!”

In fact, the situation had turned into an uproar and screams rang throughout Balman.

Why had Bloody Buffers fallen from the sky? When Alice and Takako raised their heads to look for the cause, about ten giant, black-winged monster birds descended on the town.

“Did those monster birds bring those Bloody Buffers? Why, exactly?”

“Calm down, Alice-chan. Even though everyone is making a racket, it’s fine. This is an Adventurer’s Town, after all.”

Part 10

Takako said in a calm manner.

When they surveyed their chaotic surroundings, they saw that the confused Adventurers, who were crying and shouting at the same time, were slowly beginning to fight the Bloody Buffers.

It had certainly been surprising for monsters to suddenly fall from the sky, but everyone seemed to be dealing with it without any particular problems. It didn't look like it would take them very long to completely suppress this level of damage.

"Kukuku...fuhahaha! Not bad, humans! Even though you are at peace now...today is just a test! It's a declaration of war...the Demon King Army will control the humans!"

Immediately after, a voice resounded inside them, as if it were speaking directly into their minds.

Alice and Takako immediately looked towards the birds that were flocking in the sky. The birds all seemed to be looking down, and they could see a Demon with two horns standing at the front.

"Ara...Could he be your father?"

"No...Father isn't that young, and he doesn't have silver hair. But, why is he using the Demon King's name in such a place?"

When Takako checked, with a slightly troubled look, Alice hastily denied it.

However, Alice couldn't hide her look of confusion. It was possible that they were just using the Demon King's name, but they had unquestionably declared war against the humans.

"Fear us, humans...! Demon King-sama has finally begun to act in order to destroy Humanity. In both his name and in reality, you guys will be controlled...for all of eternity!"

*****Kagami's POV*****

“So...hungry. There's so much free time. Hurry up and come back.”

After Takako and Alice left, Kagami laid down on top of the bed, since he had nothing to do. Whether or not it was good to sleep early after eating, he deeply regretted not going to the bath together with them. However, since Balman was always crowded, regardless of the time of day, it seemed too troublesome to walk out right now, even if it was the middle of the night. It would be annoying if he passed by Takako and Alice, so Kagami was waiting on standby.

“As always, it seems like they are having fun. As expected of Balman, cows are even falling from the sky.”

Kagami laughed lightly as he looked outside of the window. Cows were rapidly coming down from the sky to wave at him. He couldn't help making a retort when such an event was happening.

“If you are showing me this, then today's dinner will be black beef...No, it will be something less expensive, since Alice is here...But she most likely hasn't tried it before, so black beef it is...”

Kagami immediately understood that the the Monsters that were falling were Bloody Buffers. He thought it was amusing because such low Level Monsters were falling into a town where Adventurers gathered.

He initially thought that Takako had thrown them around as they fell, since her class was Monk, but he immediately changed his mind.

“Gururu.....ruooooo!”

“Eh? This is extremely annoying.”

A Bloody Buffer broke through the ceiling and fell into the room, landing right next to Kagami's bed.

“Eh-...I wonder what the repair cost will be.”

Kagami looked up at the sky, more concerned about the condition of the broken ceiling than the Bloody Buffer that had fallen in front of him, and noticed the black Monster birds which had dropped the Bloody Buffers. As they flew about and filled the sky, Kagami frowned.

“It doesn’t look like Takako-chan threw them...Did those Monsters do this?”

Black monster birds were fluttering around in the sky. From what Kagami knew, they only appeared in groups. They were only Level 138 Monsters that flew around the Demon King’s castle, the Hell Crows.

Why were they flying about in a flock at such a place? They were even cooperating with fellow Monsters who originally inhabited different areas. Although there were various other thoughts that Kagami initially had,

“It’s a flying piggybank!”

Is what he quickly thought of them as.

Since Hell Crows were able to fly around in the sky, they rarely came down to the ground. He had to come up with a strategy to defeat them. They were monsters that Kagami did not encounter often.

However, Hell Crows liked to eat shiny gems as food, and since they were stored inside their body, you could earn a large amount of gold if you defeated them. They were Rare Monsters whose dropped Items were gems.

“I-I hate it! One, two, three, four, five, six...every single one of them is plump!”

Kagami’s thoughts immediately switched to figuring out how to defeat the Hell Crows, who were flying in the sky. He didn’t care about the ceiling’s repair cost anymore because it would be fine if he paid with the gold from defeating the Hell Crows.

He actually started to feel grateful for the Hell Crows and Bloody Buffers that had come to attack in flocks.

“Kukuku...fuhahaha! Not bad, humans! Even though you are at peace now...today is just a test! It’s a declaration of war...the Demon King Army will control the humans!”

A voice resounded inside Kagami's mind.

"Fear us, humans...! Demon King-sama has finally begun to act in order to destroy Humanity. In both his name and in reality, you guys will be controlled...for all of eternity!"

"What the hell is that guy saying."

Kagami said hatefully in response to the voice he suddenly heard. He knew the existence that was called the Demon King. Incidentally, he also knew his daughter. It was precisely because of this that he knew that the owner of this voice...was probably just a Demon. He understood that the Demon was selfishly twisting the intentions of another, which angered him a little.

"Gururururuoooooo! Guruooooooo!"

When the Bloody Buffers let out a war cry, as if they were announcing their existence, Kagami looked at them.

"Just about right."

"Guruo? Guru...!?"

Kagami grabbed one of the horns extending from the Bloody Buffer with one hand, lightly lifted it up while supporting its giant body, and flung it into the sky with full force.

Larger than a cannonball, the Bloody Buffer flew in a straight line towards the sky and collided with the flock of Hell Crows before changing into gold.

The Hell Crow that received a direct blow from the Bloody Buffer changed into a large amount of gold and gems, which scattered into the air.

"Shit! There's a possibility of other guys picking that up!"

After saying that, since there weren't any fleeing children in the vicinity, Kagami jumped out of the broken ceiling. After he found the Bloody Buffer he flung into the sky, he began to search for Takako.

“.....Eh?”

The Demon who was standing on top of the Hell Crow in the sky could not understand what had happened to the Hell Crow that was killed and wore a puzzled expression, with snot running down his nose.

Part 11

The town was wrapped in the strange sight of Bloody Buffers flying back up into the sky one by one. It looked like the cows had done their best to stand on the ground, but had been pulled back up by the force of God and flew into the sky. The scene later became famous in the town.

“Takako-san, the Bloody Buffers are flying into the sky, one after another...what’s happening?”

“Kagami-chan is probably the only one who could do such things. Even if I’m in my best condition, I don’t think I could reach those birds flying in the sky. Only he is able to fling them so high.”

Alice listened to this while staring at the Monster standing next to her with her mouth wide open. Takako, on the other hand, had an exhilarated look as she watched the Bloody Buffers and the Monster Birds falling one after another.

“But, as expected of Kagami-chan. It feels good to send them flying. It seems like he immediately understood what was happening. Let’s go, Alice-chan.”

Takako began to walk towards where the Bloody Buffers were flying into the sky. Alice nodded in agreement and chased after her.

When they checked the town’s state as they ran by, they saw that the townsfolk had already escaped from the confusing situation. Half of them were in a festive mood, while the other half was shouting in anger towards the Demons.

Those who were treating the event like a festival were drinking sake while watching the Bloody Buffers fly into the air. They also shouted and cheered as they watched the adventurers fight the Bloody Buffers that were rampaging nearby.

However, the town wasn’t undamaged and few were joyful about the Bloody Buffers. Some had suffered injuries, while others had their homes destroyed. They glared at the flocking Monster Birds with a desire for vengeance.

When she saw this, Alice’s expression became clouded. She had the feeling that she might be blamed for trying to cause a reconciliation between Demons and Humans.

Takako tried to cheer her up by saying “It’s not the first time this has happened”, and thought about the long road ahead of her. Although she had hoped that they would cooperate, it was clear that the people standing there would be opposed to the idea.

“Adventurers! Now is the time to stand up! As if we will fall to the hands of the Bloody Buffers! Let’s join forces, defeat all the Monsters, and let those who oppose us know of Humanity’s power!”

“Uoooooooooh!”

Adventurers aimed for the subjugation of the Demon King by defeating Monsters, and the party who stood in front of them, at the vanguard, had delivered a speech before the nearly-dead Bloody Buffers.

Rex pierced a Bloody Buffer with his sword. Krul stood beside him, wearing a serious look, and Tina hid behind them in embarrassment, while Palna yawned as if annoyed.

“Behold! There is no way other Roles could use this sword technique! The power of this technique does not just fling them!”

Rex pulled his sword out of the Bloody Buffer and let out a loud cry towards the heavens.

The Bloody Buffer changed into gold just as a flash of light poured onto Rex and the sky darkened with clouds.

The light that poured onto Rex spit out electricity, causing a small shockwave to hit its surroundings, and wrapped around the blade of Rex’s sword.

Then he positioned himself as if he had sheathed his blade and slowly began to move his sword.

「Holy Thunder • Furious Beheading Wave ! 」 (TN: 「聖雷 • 剛烈波斬 ! 」)

Rex swung his sword towards the sky while calling out the Skill’s name, even though he didn’t need to say it. A powerful body of light flew out, as if detached from the sword, and traveled straight towards the Hell Crows with tremendous speed, forming of a blade of light.

The blade of light hit one of the Hell Crows, piercing it, and released an electric shock that was strong enough to burn it to a crisp.

The Hell Crow changed into gold coins and gems before the electric shock had finished discharging, so the gold coins and gems were zapped into dust.

“See that! Just from my strength alone, those formidable, flapping Monsters in the sky are irrelevant! It’s not enough to scare us if they are only attacking!”

Rex returned his sword to its sheath as sweat dripped down his forehead. Though it was natural for him to be strong, since he was a Hero, he was able to defeat a high level Monster in a single blow. Alice gave him a respectful look and gasped, “Amazing...as expected of a Hero.”

“A-are you fine, Hero-sama? It seems like your body received that lightning strike?”

Krul immediately ran over after seeing the weakened Rex stagger due to using his skill just now.

“...I’m fine, but...since I used a large portion of my power, I can only cast it twice. We won’t let the Demon King Army pose a threat to Humans, even if we don’t have power.”

Rex said with a fatigued look. Krul nodded in silence and gathered the attention of the surrounding Adventurers.

“Please hear me out, everyone. Surely, a Hero’s strength is tremendous, but it’s not infinite! Everyone’s cooperation is essential to show the power of humanity to the Demon King Army...Please lend us your power, in the name of the Hero!”

“Uoooooh! Let’s do ittt!”

With Krul’s encouragement, the Adventurers’ morale was boosted and they raised their weapons one after another.

“Hero-sama...are you okay? I’ll treat you n-now!”

Meanwhile, Tina and Palna approached the exhausted Rex and Tina handed over a potion to heal his stamina. Palna looked surprised as she praised the greatness of his Holy Thunder • Furious Beheading Wave.

“This flow is a bit bad.”

Takako muttered while sighing. Alice couldn’t understand what made the flow bad. She had considered the various risks of massing them together to take them out in one fell swoop, but it wasn’t really a situation that one could call ‘bad’. She looked at the Demons in the sky and tilted her head, unable to understand.

“Everyone, it’s important to coordinate your timing! Not only are the opponents flying in the sky, they are high Level Monsters. Unlike Hero-sama, I do not think we will defeat them in one blow.”

As Alice was pondering Takako’s words, Krul issued instructions to the gathered Adventurers. Along with Rex, they prepared to cast a skill that allowed long-range attacks. Those who could not help took out Bows and Crossbows, while those who could use magic began to chant.

“Hmm?”

Takako lost her troubled look and smiled while raising her voice, as if her chance had come.

Although Alice didn’t know what the tall Takako had seen, it didn’t seem to be related to the Adventurers in front of her.

“Now! All out attack!”

On Krul’s command, all of the Adventurer’s attacks shot out simultaneously.

“Takako-chan! I leave it to you!”

“Please leave it to me!”

Almost at the same time, a man’s voice echoed, calling Takako. In response, Takako jumped into the sky, causing an exploding sound to resound.

In the next moment, the scene came into her view. Two Bloody Buffers suddenly flew out next to each other and prevented most of the Adventurer's attacks.

The two Bloody Buffers were pierced with arrows and crossbow bolts, protecting the flying Monsters. Takako, who had flown up into the air ahead of time, drop kicked the Bloody Buffers into the ground.

The Bloody Buffers that were drop kicked naturally died and their bodies changed into gold.

"Hey, hey...give me a break. Even though it took great pains to ensure four of them...don't be unreasonable."

What on earth had happened? Confused, most of the Adventurers there heard the voice and looked towards the direction that the Bloody Buffers had flown from.

There, a young villager-like man was loosely dragging two Bloody Buffers by their horns with one hand. It was Kagami.

"Y-...You!"

Why was there a Villager dragging Bloody Buffers with one hand? It was too strange to be a joke. All of the gathered Adventurers looked surprised. However, the only one to say anything was the one who already knew and had conversed with this man, Krul.

Rex's face distorted and he glared at the Villager with vengeance.

"Yoishotto."

Kagami walked up to Krul and forcibly shoved the Bloody Buffers he had dragged along into the ground. Palna saw this and said, "It's seriously planted in there," with a dry smile.

"Why are you here...were the Bloody Buffers just now thrown by you? How on earth were these Bloody Buffers beaten?"

"So many questions. Is it normal to wonder if I am the only Villager in Balman? By the way, you don't have to worry about these Bloody Buffers, because they're unconscious."

Kagami had a refreshed look, almost as if he had been plowing the fields. Krul glared at Kagami with discontent.

“What’s the meaning of this! Even though we took great pains to try and face the Demon King Army with our combined force...You’re in the way! Did you just want to show off your own power like that? Or are you actually in league with the Demons...that little sister, of course!”

“Dosukoi”(TN: a type of cheer used in sumo matches, doesn’t really have a meaning. Now you know :3)

“Hyan!?”

Kagami had been thoughtlessly listening to Krul’s complaints, but he ran out of patience because it was taking too long. He released a light, powerless chop at Krul. Krul was naturally unable to respond to the chop and she raised a strange voice when it hit her.

“A-all of a sudden, what are you...? This is the first time in my life, since I was born, that I was hit by a gentleman!”

“It would be good to treat it as a valuable experience.”

When she saw Kagami showing no remorse, Krul glared at Kagami with a red face. He didn’t really understand if she was embarrassed, angry, or shy.

“Princess...although it’s a good idea to coordinate the timing of the attacks, you only get three points out of ten.”

Krul’s glare disappeared when she heard this and she looked bewildered instead.

“W-Why?”

“This is the town, right? It would be different if there was enough power to kill them in one blow, but isn’t it careless of you to attack them without that guarantee? Won’t it be dangerous if the weakened Monsters fall in a place with people in it? Hell Crows are Level 138, so they are dangerous even without flying. What were you trying to do?”

“T-That...”

Krul diverted her glare away from Kagami, wearing a clouded expression. She hadn't considered the damage that would occur while the nearby Adventurers tried to kill the Monsters that were brought down.

“Also, aren't bows and crossbows unwise? If they were to miss, the arrows would rain down onto the city. Wouldn't they cause serious wounds to whoever they hit? It would have been dangerous if Takako-chan wasn't there.”

Kagami made eye contact with Takako, who gave a thumbs up as a 'good sign'.

After he had explained it to that extent, everyone in the hero's party, as well as Alice, understood the meaning behind Kagami's earlier actions. It was to protect the humans that lived in the town.

“Well, it's due to a lack of experience. You have to get more accustomed to fighting. However, I think your concept was good? After this, if you do your best, I think you will be able to instruct people more accurately. First of all, you should consider what should be the highest priority.”

Krul was keenly aware that she had been too obsessed with the Monsters and hadn't really thought of anything else. She had wanted to try to bear the burden of defeating the Monsters alone, rather than wanting to be released from the responsibility. She felt an uncontrollable amount of gratitude towards Kagami.

“But, the Hero over there, you are useless. Zero points.”

Before she could relay this gratitude, Kagami pointed at Rex while releasing an unusual hatred, causing her to swallow her words.

Rex was naturally scared and bewildered by the finger pointing at his body.

“W...why?”

“The power of your skill is wonderful. It's as if that skill recognizes your greatness just from you learning it...but you made both the gold and drop items disappear. Just for that, I will never forgive you. It can't be forgiven.”

Part 12

After Kagami said this, Rex muttered “Yes?” with a puzzled expression. Almost all of the surrounding people reacted in a similar way. Meanwhile, Kagami directed his line of sight towards the Hell Crows that were still flying around in the air.

“For now, leave the disposal of the Hell Crows to me! Or rather, you should leave everything to me.”

“Hold up, hold up. Even though your power is really amazing, aren’t you helpless by yourself? Your opponents are flying in the sky.”

Palna folded her arms and responded to Kagami’s shout of “Leave the processing of the Drop Items to me too!” by pointing out the problem.

However, Kagami immediately lifted up the two Bloody Buffers he had been grabbing by their horns and threw them towards the flying Hell Crows with all his might.

“Ah! It was you!!”

Rex finally realized the true identity of the one who had sent the many Bloody Buffers flying towards the sky earlier, and he raised his voice while pointing at him.

“...!!”

Rex’s face distorted when he saw the Hell Crow torn up by the direct hit from the flying Bloody Buffer. The attack seemed to give the impression that Kagami was assuming that he was the only one putting in effort.

“Y-You...aren’t you a Villager? How do you have such power!?”

One of the Adventurers who didn’t see him as an abnormal presence called out to him.

“Effort.”

Nearly everyone made a drawn expression, unsatisfied with Kagami’s statement, and wanted to say “What the hell is that guy talking about.” Only Rex glared at Kagami, clenching his teeth.

If it was just effort, he himself had also given it. Nevertheless, he could not agree with the strength of that Villager, compared to his. Effort? It couldn't be a reason like that. He had put in effort many times. But was it still not enough? Was just training not enough, despite the power he had managed to obtain until now? It couldn't be such a thing. How on earth had that guy obtained the power to make such accusations? It was impossible for him to lose like that. Such thoughts were swirling around in Rex's mind.

"Even if you don't show it, I understand your power. I'm not such an idiot that I can't understand it, no matter how many times you show it to me. I say there isn't a way for you to defeat those guys up in the air. Aren't you helpless because a Villager can't use magic?"

Kagami was amazed at what Palna said and answered, "Well, there are none."

"Eh, Kagami-san can't use magic!?"

Alice, who had been secretly nearby, looked surprised when she heard Palna.

"Ara, it was...you. Wasn't she your little sister...Kagami-san?"

Palna reacted to the sudden voice, and everyone there looked towards Alice.

Most of those who looked at Alice had normal expressions. It was just the Hero's party who had skeptical looks.

Alice saw this situation and her sight slightly shifted to the right, thinking that she had been found out.

"I'm saying that my sister calls me by my name, since a long time ago. It's not like I wasn't going to give my name. I am Kagami. Call me Bishoujo Kagami-chan~"

"...But you aren't called that."

Kagami followed up in a split second, but Palna's suspicious gaze didn't change. Kagami splendidly ignored her gaze and moved until he was in front of Alice.

“Good, were you safe? Did they call you a chibi (TN:pipsqueak, small fry etc)? It’s fine to call you a chibi until you’re one litre though?”(It’s a joke about her tits)

“I’m not a child! Rather, you’re unable to use magic, Kagami-san?”

“Just because I’m Level 999 doesn’t mean I’m omnipotent.”

Alice stared at Kagami as he replied with an uneasy look on his face, as if he was appealing to her. To think that she had never had a chance to talk about magic with him. She stared at Kagami with a sorrowful look.

For a moment, Alice thought that it couldn’t be helped, but now she really wanted to go to the toilet so she slightly directed her stare at the sky. Kagami assumed that Alice was thinking about what to say.

“Alright. It’s fine, so don’t worry about it. I’ll manage it, somehow.”

Alice loosened up after hearing those words, as if she felt relieved.

Krul lost her skeptical look when she saw this and slowly approached Alice. She hugged Alice while seeming to be slightly apologetic.

“I agree...it was scary, huh. I mean, you’re still so small. But it’s fine, we will surely annihilate the Demon King’s Army. That’s why, isn’t it fine to be at ease?”

Krul misunderstood that Alice had been frightened after seeing the Demon King’s Army and she gently smiled at Alice while reassuring her.

“Role, Princess. Skill, Misinterpretation.”

“...Did you say something?”

“...Isn’t it just your imagination?”

Krul faced Kagami, as if she wanted to ask him something, and, while looking as if she had seen a pitiful person, responded to him.

“Kagami-san...was it? I still haven’t introduced myself. I was born on the tenth month of the lunar calendar and I am called Krul • Hexal Doria. Although Kagami-san’s

power has been repeatedly acknowledged, I don't think we can make the Demon King's Army understand Humanity's power if we don't coordinate our power now. I'm thankful for your suggestions earlier...but please leave this place to us."

"Why do you think that you can make them understand?"

"Eh?"

She had been teeming with confidence that he would advocate her idea, so Kagami's unexpected response surprised her. She was slightly bewildered, not knowing the intent of the question. After taking a deep breath, she stared at Kagami in a serious manner.

"The Demon King's Army doesn't know Humanity's potential. Therefore, we have to attack and show them our power. Regardless of whether we attacked carelessly or not, it's necessary to make them understand! We need to try and attack them again, without thinking about things like being careless!"

"Even though you thought about it until now, why haven't you noticed it?"

"What do you mean by that?"

"Why do you think that the Demon King's Army doesn't understand Humanity's potential?"

In response to Kagami's baffling question, Krul stopped and thought about it carefully. Although the question was unusual, it had a simple answer and she came up with it quickly.

"Because...the Demon King's Army has never come to attack us?"

"That's right! You understand well! Well done, well done!"

"P-Please don't treat me like a child! What's the point you're trying to make?!"

Although she had said the answer to the question herself, Krul didn't care about it and raised her voice while blushing in response to Kagami. When Kagami saw this, he thought from the bottom of his heart that her common sense was terrible and let out a slight sigh.

Part 13

“There have been no attacks until now because of the Demon King’s will, right? But they came and attacked. Did something happen to the Demon King? Do you not think that there was some type of change with the Demon King?”

“That may be...but even if something did happen, it wouldn’t change the fact that the Demon King is an enemy. I do not know what changed, but it is undeniable that they came to attack.”

When he saw the look in Krul’s eyes, which were filled with conviction, he looked up towards the Hell Crows in the sky and then stared off into the distance while saying “Well, yeah.”

People’s opinions wouldn’t change so easily. Kagami knew this well. That was why he had given up on various things. He had just fought alone and continued to gather gold for his own purposes.

Since she couldn’t see things from Kagami’s perspective, she could never understand him. Kagami realized this from her desire to fight.

“...Well, yeah. The Demon King is certainly an enemy, for humans that is.”

Alice’s expression dimmed at these words. However, as if he wanted to comfort her, he put his hand on Alice and continued to speak.

“That’s why it’s fine if the Demon King defeats you guys, and it’s fine if he had plans to defeat you from the start. But, what would you do if the Demons who came to attack this time were unrelated to the Demon King?”

“The Demon Army that is attacking now...has no relations to the Demon King?”

Of course, it was a remark that indicated that Kagami had some kind of understanding of the connection between the Demon King and the Demon King Army that was attacking right now. At the same time, he had insisted that something was wrong.

It was a fact that it was the first time Humanity had been attacked by the Demons, even though the Demon King wasn’t there.

“They might be acting violently after borrowing the authority of the Demon King, but there are also Demons who hold a grudge against the Demon King and might be trying to lure Humanity to a quick defeat. It might just be a trap.”

“...And? After all that, what is it that you want to say?”

Palna was unable to stand Kagami’s pompous way of speaking any longer and she glared at him, as if angry, while letting out a sigh.

“Instead of defeating them, you should apprehend and interrogate them. Isn’t it more important to learn the truth than to show your strength? In any case, even if they are an enemy, let’s go listen to them to learn about their internal affairs. It looks like they are over there.”

“What will you do after listening to them? It’s not like they will stop being enemies. Besides, aren’t they in the sky? It’s impossible to catch them.”

“You would be able to figure out if it is a trap or something else that they’re plotting, right? You don’t have to defeat them just because they’re an enemy. Saying that it’s useless to catch them...don’t you realize that you are giving up?”

Palna felt sweat run down her cheek as she listened to Kagami’s words. She attempted to talk before deciding to listen to him. Kagami directed his sight to Takako and both of them nodded their heads.

“K-Kagami-san, what do you intend to do?”

“Something like this.”

Right after Alice asked her question, Kagami snapped his fingers as a signal. Takako vigorously kicked off of the ground, generating a tremor that felt like an earthquake, and jumped into the sky. Kagami also jumped into the sky, with enough speed to catch up to Takako, and left a crater in the ground, as if there had been an explosion.

“Takako-chan, I’ll leave it to you!”

“Please leave it to me. It’s a free human transport service with no guarantee of keeping one’s life...I’ll go? Go dieeeeeee!

Before the approaching Kagami caught up and passed by her, Takako twisted and rotated her body and kicked Kagami up into the sky with all her might. Kagami flew as if he had been blown away by her feet.

Kagami had willfully named the skill, 【Takako Bazooka】. It was a Jump Combination technique which allowed Takako to send someone into the sky.

It was a skill that he had requested Takako to use once in the past out of curiosity. He hadn't thought of using it to make someone fly until now. Kagami had received damage beyond his expectations so the skill had been sealed, with the reason being "It is useless."

However, it was the perfect skill for the current situation, where the enemy was in the sky. The pair had come to a mutual understanding just by meeting their gazes.

"Ah, well, this and that."

Consequently, this skill had a weakness that couldn't be understood with the few attempts Kagami and Takako had made.

"Didn't know this makes someone pass through without hitting anything at all."

If it wasn't targeted properly, it became rather sad because the person would pass by without hitting anything. Takako noticed that, after kicking him upwards, Kagami was clearly flying towards the beautiful night sky that was filled with stars but empty of Hell Crows.

"Goodbye, Kagami-chan~"

Takako immediately gave up on Kagami's life. Giving up, she closed her mouth with her hand as she fell back down towards the ground and teared up. It was as if she wanted to say something, even if it was irrelevant.

"Aaaaaaaah-.....!"

Sure enough, Kagami missed the flock of Hell Crows by a large amount and flew higher into the sky. It was as if life's mysteries had come from the ground into the air, while

raising his voice, and the Demon who was riding on one of the Hell Crows instinctively felt fear.

“W-...What is this town, exactly...? Is it really a human town? Not only do Bloody Buffers come flying, but humans as well...? Indiscriminate? Are they indiscriminate?”

The heart rates of the Demons that called themselves the Demon King Army rose to unprecedented levels.

Part 14

It was likely that the situation was different from what they had predicted. The Bloody Buffers had understood that their only purpose was to cause destruction and confusion, since it was a town of Adventurers.

Even if, by chance, a hero had come to stay in this town, the Hero's usage of the Light Slash was limited to defeating one Hell Crow.

However, it was unexpected for the Bloody Buffers to be blown into the sky, especially by a single human.

Although the thrown Bloody Buffers had only hit the Hell Crows, the Demon was uncertain as to whether humans had also been hit and gradually became fearful. (ED: He's scared because he thinks that the humans don't care about friendly fire.)

There was something unexpected within this town.

"Calm down a little."

"Do you think I can be calm!? This plan is really crazy! Shit...By this, Demon King-sama's dignity will be...!"

The voice behind him caused him to hang his head and lose his composure in anger.

After several seconds passed, he realized that there was a puzzling presence behind him, which had spoken with him as if it were natural. He did not know why it had come to talk to him, but there shouldn't have been any being who could talk to him while he was in the air. He became pale and nervously glanced behind him.

"Who the hell are you...!?"

"What's with that outdated speech? I'm just a villager who is passing by."

The Demon was at a loss for words when he saw the bizarre scene of the presence in front of him calmly standing amongst the Hell Crows. The presence was casually enjoying the view that could be seen from this height. As if there would be a Villager in this situation. Villager?

“Villagers...should know the limits of their bodies!”

When the fearful Demon recognized the existence in front of him as a Villager, he impatiently pointed his palm at Kagami and released three shots of close range Blast Annihilation Magic. The blast of the fierce explosions and the sweltering heat attacked Kagami, but...

“Calm down.”

Only the upper portions of his clothing had been blown off. The person who had been hit by the magic repeated his earlier words, while staying composed.

Kagami had taken damage, without a doubt. His skin was burnt and blood was dripping from the wound inflicted by the explosion. However, the damage done was too low.

The Demon had planned his attack to show his true strength. Three blasts of his Blast Annihilation magic should have been enough to kill opponents who were around Level 80, or at least leave them on the brink of death. He shivered at Kagami’s composed look and thought, “That guy is...”

“How did you come here...? Answer me, human.”

“A gorilla-like person kicked me. You might think that it was useless to have landed on a Hell Crow by luck, but I got here by riding the other Hell Crows.”

Although the Demon couldn’t really understand what was being said, he realized that this human was the one who had flown by earlier.

“Who are you...perhaps you aren’t a Villager? Are you a Hero? Or maybe you’re a Sage?”

“Nope. I’m just a normal Villager.”

Kagami revealed his Status Window’s Level and Role, as usual. When the Demon saw the Level value of 999, he was speechless from surprise.

“I-Impossible! Surely such humans don’t exist!”

He made a remark a few seconds later, as if his heart had temporarily stopped beating.

“No, they do.”

Kagami became doubtful and made a troubled expression when he saw the fervent and narrow-minded Demon.

“You aren’t listening...if there are guys like you out there, then, by this, the position of the Demon King will be...!”

“Ah, calm down. I don’t have any desires at all to defeat the Demon King.”

“...? What do you mean?”

“I am friends with the Demon King’s daughter after all. The name is Kagami Kouji. It’s a pleasure.”

The Demon showed a mixture of confusion and surprise at Kagami’s words.

“I don’t really understand what you are saying.”

“Well, the meaning is that I am currently traveling with and taking care of the Demon King’s daughter.”

“...!? You’re saying that Alice-sama is in this town!?”

Although the Demon did not know if what Kagami said was true, he feared that he might have put the Demon King’s daughter in danger and his chest felt painful.

Before this operation began, the Demon had searched for Alice, because there had been an order from the Demon King to bring Alice back. He had headed towards the Demon Village where Alice was supposed to be living but could not find her, even though the Demon King Army had searched the surroundings in full force.

Therefore, regardless of the real intentions of this man, who claimed he was a friend of the Demon King, the chance of Alice being here was considerable. After all, there was no reason for a normal human to know that the Demon King had a daughter.

“Are you...an ally of Demons?”

Although it was very unlikely, the Demon at least tried to ask Kagami.

“I’m neither an ally nor an enemy. Though, I think that it’s inevitable that the Demon King will be killed.”

The Demon slightly regained his composure. Kagami’s expression brightened when he saw that the Demon understood some of what he was talking about.

“Finally, I’m saved because there is a guy who will actually speak with me. I’m a human so nobody would listen to me, just because I’m supposed to be an enemy.”

“If you mean that you didn’t come to defeat me, what are you planning to do? Did you come to tell me that you are holding Alice-sama hostage?!”

“I came to ask questions.”

When Kagami smiled, the Demon felt a chill and was unable to say anything. It wasn’t because of the height or the swift, cold wind caused by the Hell Crow’s flying speed. The Demon was attacked by an overwhelming feeling of anxiety and felt as if his hands and feet had been completely bound.

“This attack operation, was it an order from the Demon King?”

“It-...It was undeniably an order from the Demon King! Demon King-sama has finally begun to move in order to dispel the humiliation we have received from the humans until now! Humans must all be destroyed!”

“Although I said earlier that I’m neither an enemy nor an ally, if I am an enemy, isn’t it fine if I just decide to kill the Demon King?”

That was when the Demon finally understood what he had been sensing. The eyes of the man in front of him were bloodthirsty, as if indicating that the man was coming to hit him. As if the man would be willing to resort to such an unspeakable lie.

Perhaps noticing this, Kagami stopped smiling and became expressionless. Although Kagami’s words had not been a joke, the Demon concluded that he could confirm Kagami’s true intentions behind coming up to such a place.

“Bastard...you said earlier that you are friends with the Demon King. Is that...really true?”

“Aah, that. I exaggerated so I could calmly talk with you. Although our relationship isn’t good enough to be called friends...he is an old acquaintance. I was treated well, a long time ago.”

“You said that you were treated well?”

“Aah, the Demon King at the time wasn’t really a guy who was thinking of trying to destroy the humans. Rather...he was a philosophical person. That’s the reason that I came here.”

Kagami closed his eyes and let out a big sigh, as if remembering the olden days.

Then he slowly opened his eyes and drew nearer to the Demon. He opened his mouth while meeting the Demon’s gaze seriously.

“Is it really the Demon King who gave that order? Did the Demon King say it to you in person?”

The Demon was overwhelmed by Kagami’s seriousness. He wondered, “Why would this man worry about the Demon King giving such an order?”

“Alice said that the Demon King had collapsed because of an illness.”

“...Alice-sama did? Impossible. The Demon King is alive and well!”

“Alice has been running around alone for the Demon King. Since she’s like that, she wouldn’t think of the possibility that you guys are lying. While on the subject, I don’t think that she believes that the Demon King would destroy humans either.”

The Demon realized that Kagami’s bloodthirst earlier was not because Kagami had come to try to kill him.

He honestly believed that the Demon King wasn’t someone who would do such a thing, so he was confirming whether or not his trust had been betrayed. The fear the Demon had felt from Kagami’s earlier bloodthirst was slightly eased by this realization.

Part 15

“You said...Demon King-sama is sick?”

When his fear subsided, he remembered meeting the Demon King in person at the Demon King's Castle before he came here. The safety of the Demon King took precedence over anything else, but the Demon King within his memories had, without a doubt, been majestically seated upon his throne.

There wasn't anything particularly strange in what he remembered, though he might have been wrong about it. Like always, the Demon King had been seated on his throne in the deepest part of the huge palace. The one who called himself the General of the Demon King's Army and also served as the Demon King's butler, Estelar Urgot, had been on the Demon King's right side and had given the order to the Demon.

Although he hadn't thought anything was strange back then, the Demon noticed something was amiss.

“...The one who gave the order to me is not Demon King-sama?”

He placed a hand on his mouth and muttered, despite his worries. Kagami smiled without hesitation when he heard this.

“Hey, isn't it still too early to decide?”

“I-It is, but wait! Demon King-sama was nearby! We couldn't have denied that order!?”

“That's why I said it's too early to decide. I, too, don't know what happened. There is the chance that he had a change of heart and is trying to conquer the world, but isn't it also possible that he is being manipulated by someone?”

“Being manipulated? Impossible! It's impossible for a gentleman like the Demon King to be manipulated!”

“I only said that it was a possibility. I don't know if it's true, but Alice said that the Demon King is sick.”

For the time being, since it was unknown whether the Demon King could issue a command, Kagami's bloodthirst disappeared and he replied optimistically.

The Demon considered Kagami's words. If this story was true, Kagami's existence would become a danger to him. Originally, the purpose of this operation was to let the Adventurers gathered in this town learn of the existence of the Demon King Army. The aim was to overwhelm the Adventurers with the feeling that nowhere was safe so that, in the future, they would be more likely to die. The goal wasn't to destroy the Adventurers.

If nothing else, it wouldn't be a big problem if he returned now. The Demon removed his cloak and dispersed the magic in his body while issuing a command.

"Full speed to the Demon King's Castle! Confirm Demon King-sama's true intentions...!"

When he issued the command, the flock of Hell Crows all immediately changed their course and headed towards the southwest of Balman.

"No, I won't let you do that."

At the same time, Kagami grabbed the head of the Hell Crow he was riding and forcibly moved it towards the other Hell Crows.

When he got close enough, he jumped off of his Hell Crow and grabbed another Hell Crow, throwing it towards the others while in midair. He then landed back on the first Hell Crow, as if he had adjusted it to catch him as he came down.

"Look! Quickly! Heal before I fall! Heal!"

He grabbed the head of the Hell Crow again and moved it towards the two Hell Crows that had changed into gems and gold. He moved both of his arms at a speed that was too fast to be seen and caught everything.

"What are you doing y-you bastard! Aren't you also worried about Demon King-sama? I have to go and confirm it! Whether or not this operation is truly something Demon King-sama wants!"

"No but...they're Hell Crows."

Because they're Hell Crows? The Demon couldn't understand at all and he felt like he was crazy when he saw the gloating Villager in front of him.

"T-Then, I'll let you follow me, you bastard! After you follow me, I'll let you deal with the Hell Crows as you wish! How about that?"

"No~, well, I absolutely must bring Alice with me."

"T-Then, it's fine if you bring Alice-sama along as well! We'll let Alice-sama ride on one of the Hell Crows that's falling down right now and head towards the Demon King's Castle! You shouldn't have any complaints like this!"

"Well~, won't they die the moment they land on the ground? There's a Hero down below, too."

"In that case, go down separately and bring Alice-sama with you! I'll wait for you!"

"Calm down!"

Kagami gestured for the screaming Demon to shut his mouth before staring into his eyes seriously.

"There is a possibility that the Demon King is being manipulated and there's also a possibility that you made a fool out of yourself. If you go and try to confirm it, the Demon King, or rather you, might be put in harm's way. *Don't put the cart before the horse. Wouldn't it be easier to secretly investigate the way to get into the Demon King's Castle after pretending to be beaten to death by the humans? Besides, I don't want there to be a weird rumor about me going together with a Demon who was betrayed. In other words, nobody will benefit from us traveling there in the air like this. That's why I think that defeating all the Hell Crows here would make it a win-win situation. Also, it would be annoying to let all these Hell Crows return to the Demon King's Castle without turning into gems and gold. Extremely annoying. This is very important. It's much better to walk there, so I want gold immediately. Do you understand?"

(TN: idiom that means you've got your priorities reversed)

"I don't understand at all."

As the Demon responded, Kagami jumped onto another Hell Crow. He then jumped onto a third Hell Crow, almost as if he had kicked the previous one, and repeated this action multiple times with lightning speed.

The moment he jumped off of a Hell Crow, it changed into gems and gold. When the last Hell Crow, which the Demon was riding, fell towards the ground, Kagami began to gather the falling gems and gold.

The Demon was stunned and could only watch Kagami. There had not been any time for him to interfere either. The ten Hell Crows had been taken out in ten seconds and his was the only one left.

“B-...Bastard. Good god...no, that was too quick. Stop collecting the gems! You’re carrying too much! At this rate, we will fall down with the Hell Crows!”

“W-...What do you mean by that?”

Sure enough, Kagami was with the Demon and a large amount of gems and gold had been stacked on top of one of the Hell Crows. With a “Gueh!”, the Hell Crow raise a bitter cry and steadily dropped in altitude.

Kagami, who had fallen a bit, beat up the Hell Crows above him. When the last Hell Crow turned into clumps of gold and gems, Kagami and the Demon fell, along with the gems and gold.

“W-Will this save us, even if we fall down? Is that fine!?”

“If it’s from this height, then probably...It might hurt me a little. As for you, it might be really painful.”

“What did...you say?...AaaaaaaAAH!”

Kagami and the Demon fell into the middle of the vast forest that existed southwest of Balman. He crashed into the ground in a straight line, while the Demon fell while being hit by tree branches and leaves.

“W-What are you doing!?”

“Didn’t you burn my clothes? I want to wrap the gems with cloth.”

Kagami placed the cloak he took from the Demon on the ground and began to move the fallen gold and gems onto it. The Demon, who had been hurt by the fall, silently watched him.

“Now that I think about it, I didn’t ask for your name. What is it?”

Kagami asked the Demon, who was leaning against a tree, as he collected the gems.

“Menou • Abebrasham...A descendant of a family that has served Demon King-sama for ages. Demon King-sama...I began to serve him and Alice-sama three years ago.”

“Hee- Then, you are quite young. That reminds me, when I went to the Demon Palace a long time ago, there was a butler-like old man.”

“That would be my grandfather. He passed away three years ago. He had placed his hopes on me, and I was supposed to succeed him.”

Kagami continued gathering gems as he listened to Menou. Despite a Demon being so close, Kagami continued to gather the gems, as if the Demon wasn’t there. Menou felt strange when he saw this.

“You bastard...you won’t kill me?”

“Don’t ask such a question. It just sounds stupid.”

“Sounds stupid...you say?”

If a Demon and a Human were trying to settle matters between themselves, it would be normal for them to try to kill each other. It was strange for the man in front of him to not do that, and his unexpected words made Menou lose his bearings.

“It’s obvious that you will fight if you hate humans and are in a situation where fighting is the only option, but you don’t seem to be that kind of person. More than anything else...aren’t you really worried about Alice and the Demon King right now? Such a nice guy.”

“W-...What an idiot, saying such things. You must have some kind of a relationship with humans!”

“In my opinion, those humans are idiots. If there weren’t any Monsters, we would know that. However, because of the Monsters, Humans fear death and oppose Demons. That’s the only reason, right? It’s just Humans and Demons fighting each other. Even though they are similar existences, to fight just because of that...that’s why, I don’t really want to kill Demons.”

Menou was shocked for a moment by these unexpected words but, for some reason, he was immediately convinced. Kagami’s credibility was also enhanced by the fact that, despite this situation where Menou couldn’t do anything, he continued to gather the gems without harming Menou.

“Well, I’ve gathered the gems and gold now. I’ll go home and say that I’ve defeated all of them. I’ll bring Alice here around noon tomorrow, so let’s go to the Demon King’s Castle together at that time. I had only planned to send Alice there but I also want to go and see what condition the Demon King is in.”

“Why do we need to go together? Won’t there be a higher risk of being hunted down by the humans?”

“But isn’t it dangerous for you to try to go back by yourself from here? Besides, even if you go back, it’s dangerous. Won’t it be more reassuring for Alice if you’re with us? You don’t have to worry, since I will protect her.”

Menou was dumbfounded. After seeing Menou’s expression, Kagami said, “Well, see ya tomorrow,” and left. He was carrying the gems and gold wrapped in the Demon’s cloak on his back.

“Demon King-sama and Alice-sama are friends with a human?.....Hmph.”

Menou imagined it and snorted while thinking, “There are also these types of humans.” Although it was very slightly, he accepted Kagami.

He suddenly looked up into the night sky and saw the full moon. His mood became brighter and he calmed down as he heard the night wind blowing through the starry sky.

He had attacked and was defeated. He had not been victorious but being comforted had filled his heart with wonder.

CHAPTER 3

IT'S FINE FOR YOU TO BECOME WHAT YA WANNA BE

Part 1

"Kagami-san, wake up. Look, you have to go and greet Menou!"

"Nn? Aah-...Let me sleep...for eight more hours..."

"Hurry and wake up already. Otherwise, Takako-san will to come wake you, you know?"

"I'm up."

It was morning in Balman. The attack by the Demon King Army had happened the previous day. The houses that had been destroyed were now being repaired and the injured people were being nursed. Despite it being morning, the town was crowded. The scene of Adventurers with the Roles of Monk and Craftsmen busily coming and going could be seen from the Inn's window.

Last night, Kagami had returned to the town after slaying all the Monsters and lied about the Demon running away, settling his state of affairs. He was questioned by Adventurers of various Levels and the Hero's party because they wanted to know how he had defeated them. Afterwards, he brought Alice and Takako back to the Inn and told them the truth.

"It's been awhile since I've met Menou...Look, Kagami-san, change your clothes, change your clothes!"

"Kyaaa, Alice is a pervert! Geez, don't be so fussy. I'm sure that Uncle will be waiting. I already told him that we would go greet him around noon."

Alice smiled radiantly as she forcibly took the futon away from Kagami.

“I’m sure you’re an S, taking the futon away from me with that smile. Actually, why have you been smiling so radiantly since yesterday?”

“Kagami-san didn’t waste his breath to defeat Menou and since we’ll meet with him, I have a chance to properly talk with him. I’m really happy.”

Alice was elated and also told him, “Kagami-san, thank you.” When he saw that dazzling smile, Kagami thought about the Black Steak he ate while grinning yesterday and took mental damage. Although he thought about the gold he had saved, his heart still hurt, somehow.

“Now that I think about it, Kagami-san, what did you do with that large amount of gold and gems you were holding yesterday?”

“I deposited all of it, since there’s no way to carry it. It was an unexpected harvest.”

All the gems that had been dropped by the Hell Crows had come out to a total of 51 Gold and 900 Silver. Rather than giving half of it to the townsfolk for the town’s expenses, he had quickly deposited all of it into his safe at the Quest Guild.

He had an account registered in the Quest Guild so any other Quest Guild building became a bank that he could withdraw gold from.

Since the Quest Guild existed all over the world, a lot of Adventurers used it. It was the safest bank so they could deposit without any worries. There was also a charge of one Silver taken as commission for withdrawals so, other than Adventurers, very few people used it.

“Is Takako-chan back yet? After eating yesterday, she said she would go take a look at the horrors of her Bar Club, but it seems like she didn’t go there.”

“She came back once, but she immediately went to help out the townsfolk. She said it was important to socialize with the neighborhood.”

At Alice’s answer, Kagami muttered, “Just like Takako-chan,” took off his sleepwear, and began to change into the plain clothes that he always wore.

He then saw Takako's figure outside, walking rapidly while holding two large logs, from the bay window and immediately erased that memory, deciding that he had not seen anything.

"Waah! Kagami-san, why are you changing in front of me!"

"Isn't it fine? I'm wearing underwear. There's no problem if you think of it as a swimsuit."

"That's not the problem! I'm an elegant woman, so think about it a little!"

Kagami responded with "Be careful next time" to Alice, who was complaining while puffing her cheeks, and continued to change his clothes without taking her complaints to heart.

When she saw this, Alice, who was being treated like a child, headed to the dining hall on the first floor, thinking it was unpleasant.

Kagami finished changing with a 'pew' and collected the luggage in the room before chasing after her.

He returned the room's key at the first floor lobby before walking to the dining hall, putting his luggage down, and sitting in front of Alice, who was sitting with a glum look.

"Don't be so angry. Were my muscles that unsightly?"

"Not really."

He sighed as he met her eyes, while she dangled her feet. He thought that her mood would be lifted by eating food, so they ordered from the lady who was carrying food around the dining hall.

Sure enough, when Alice carried over her food several minutes later, her mood had brightened up. When Kagami saw the brightened Alice, who was happily eating while asking him what food he had ordered, he was amazed. He then thought "Whatever," feeling satisfied.

"Well then, we have to plan the schedule of the trip to the Demon King's Castle."

“Certainly, it will take us ten days to get there. Though, I think that it would take twice as long if we tried to move discretely.”

“Going there is rather simple, but since we have a few people, as well as that Demon Uncle who can’t hide his magic, it will take several trips to get supplies from the town.”

Kagami spread open a map of the Arcasia Kingdom while holding bread in one hand. Alice looked slightly anxious.

It couldn’t be helped that she wanted to know the truth behind her father’s illness and the Demon Army invasion as quickly as possible. Above all else, she intuitively felt that things would become irreversible if they were slow to act.

“Horses...are no good?”

“Horses would absolutely never let Demons ride them...Alice, your magic is suppressed but that Demon Uncle...Menou is impossible.”

Alice was disappointed and dropped her shoulders.

“Well...if we need to go there quickly, there is definitely a way.”

Alice immediately perked up at these words.

“How?”

“There’s this certain thing that we could ride that would let us arrive quickly, but I absolutely don’t want to ride it.”

“W-Why is that? I...I want to know what is happening, even if it’s just a little faster.”

Kagami, who didn’t know Alice’s feelings, thought about it as sweat ran down his forehead. Honestly, Kagami was also worried about what had happened to the Demon King. His intuition felt that they could not be slow about this, no matter what. It was more important than worrying about being attacked by humans.

“Yosh, let’s decide it based on what we see. We’ll go with the majority vote.”

“Takako-san says it’s fine if we ride her?”

“Takako isn’t someone who would want to let multiple people ride her?”

Kagami put the payment for the meal on the table, stood up, and walked out of the Inn. Alice trotted along, ahead of Kagami.

“That certain thing...is a monster called Kenta • Uros. It’s a Monster that exists outside of the Arcasia Kingdom. Although they can talk like a Demon, they are still Monsters so there is no point in worrying about them releasing magic like a Demon. In other words, they are harmless.”

“There is such a Monster, huh? I didn’t know, since it was impossible for me to leave the Arcasia Kingdom. It wasn’t listed in the books I read either.”

“They were put on an island country instead of the Demon King’s Castle, since it was too dangerous to have them inside the Arcasia Kingdom.”

Kagami stopped at one of the town’s crossroads and pointed at a wagon that was approaching with a rattling sound.

Alice’s gaze followed his fingertip and the wagon reflected in her view caused her heart to pound violently. A Kenta-Uros had come forward, pulling the wagon. Its upper body had the appearance of a human that bore horns, as if it were a Demon, while its lower half had the appearance of a horse.

This wagon was pulled by two Kenta-Uros. One was blond and had a beautiful figure, while the other, who was old enough to be an Uncle, had a black mustache and short, black hair that was combed straight back from its forehead. They had a unique aroma and gave off a grand atmosphere as they pulled the wagon.

“A-Amazon’! They are able to speak because the upper half of their bodies is like a Demon, right? But, I don’t feel magic, even though their horns look like a Demon’s...Amazing! The path of coexistence that I am aiming for will be gran-mogo!”

“Quiet! Your voice is loud. ‘Cause here, you’re a human. For now, it’s still too early to decide...so just look.”

As the Kenta-Uros pulling the wagon passed by Kagami, he sent them a distorted gaze, as if he felt grossed out to see a Kenta-Uros’s face.

Without saying anything, the Kenta-Uros, who had noticed Kagami's gaze, stopped in front of him.

"A human...this face, what is it?"

【Kenta-Uros Feature #1】 Too much pride. No, although it was uncertain if their pride was actually high, if they saw a disagreeable gaze, they would definitely stop and begin to talk about something.

(They would start talking even if it was something dead)

When Kagami continued to look at the Kenta • Uros without saying anything or changing his expression in response to the Uncle Kenta • Uros, the blond Kenta • Uros stepped forward.

"Human...we are a noble existence. You guys are inferior living beings."

【Kenta-Uros Feature #2】 They always believe that they are of a noble existence, even in front of humans of an overwhelmingly higher level.

"Those like you are an existence equal to rubbish. You should be thankful that we've even let you hear our noble voices. Such trash is..."

"Shut up! Walk faster!"

As the Kenta-Uros were speaking, the distressed Merchant man aboard the wagon cried out and, with a *bashibashibashibashi!*, whipped the two Kenta-Uros that had stopped. At the same time as the violent, painful sound rang out,

""NNH AAAAAHHHNN FEELS SO GOODDDDDDD!"

The two Kenta-Uros began to shout happily, their eyes rolled upwards, and their tongues hung out of their open mouths when they were struck with the whip.

【Kenta-Uros Feature #3】 Overwhelmingly masochistic.

They had power several times higher than that of a horse, were able to vigorously continue past any obstacle, and were faster than horses. Since they looked down on

humans, it would be normal for them to never obey. However, they were masochistic so they were just harmless Monsters that obeyed humans and wanted to get whipped. They are: Kenta-Uros.

They were Monsters who wanted to be whipped, rather than wanting to preserve their pride. They are Kenta-Uros. However, the Kenta-Uros recognized this as a give-and-take relationship so, to them, their pride was being preserved.

“Amazin’, Kagami-san. This is the first time that I thought I was so hated.”

“I know.”

Part 2

Alice's eyes darted around quickly as the carriage rattled by her. The two Kenta-Uros muttered, "This doesn't mean we will ever yield to humans, we just understand what is truly valuable, okay? Humans are..." as they passed.

"I thought my eyes would rot. Well? Still want to ride one?"

Alice silently shook her head without changing her expression.

"Ara? If it isn't Kagami-chan. You've finally woken up."

As the Kenta-Uros passed by, they saw a pig-like Uncle with a towel around his neck, which was as thick as a log. He seemed to be helping to rebuild the town and was working up a sweat by carrying a large tree in one arm.

Seeing that, Alice was convinced that there were only amazing people in this town.

"Geez, even though it would be faster if we just rode those Kenta-Uros. What's there to be stubborn about?"

Before the sun reached its zenith, Kagami's group left the town and headed towards the promised meeting place with Menou.

Kagami and Takako were carrying a large rucksack containing several days worth of food and equipment.

"For them to hate being whipped...I even slapped them with a *bashibashi*."

When Takako said that regretfully, Kagami looked at Alice with an astonished look that seemed to want to say 'huh'. Alice returned a nod, wearing the same questioning look.

"I also have my pride. I hate riding them and I hate seeing their gross reactions everyday."

"So selfish. At least put up with it, since it's more difficult to walk there after...all? Ara, isn't that him?"

Takako pointed her finger at a man with long, silver hair. He was heavily dressed, as if he was meeting the kingdom's soldiers in full uniform. The man wasn't wearing the cloak that Kagami had seen yesterday, but a surcoat-like cloak.

The man appeared to be silently waiting for something. Although it was possible to mistake him for someone else for an instant, there were two horns protruding near his ears, which was the mark of a Demon, so Kagami confirmed that he was the Demon he had met during the attack yesterday.

“Menou!”

The one who reacted first after seeing the Demon was Alice.

When she saw Menou, she merrily ran over to him.

“A-Alice-sama! You really are safe...this Menou was worried sick.”

When Alice approached Menou, he immediately knelt down, putting one knee onto the ground, and bowed.

“Well, I'm glad that Menou is safe and sound.”

Alice said with a smile. Menou seemed slightly relieved and his expression softened. He stood up and looked towards Kagami.

“It seems...that your story wasn't a lie.”

“There isn't any merit to lying about such a thing. If there was, you would have already been incapacitated a long time ago.”

After Kagami said that, Menou muttered ‘Indeed, that must be why’ with a sarcastic smile.

“Ara? Ara-n? He's not that bad of a guy...! His appearance is also quite lovely...!”

As if following up on Kagami's statement, Takako's figure appeared in front of Menou as the sound of heavy steps resounded.

Although he had caught a glimpse of her appearance earlier, Menou instinctively jumped backwards when he heard her queer tone.

“You...who the hell are you?!”

Menou took a stance and flames created from his magic enveloped both of his hands.

When she saw this, Alice hastily instructed Menou to calm down.

“Takako-san is on our side! Together with Kagami-san! They are protecting me!”

“On our side...you say? However, well...muu...is that so?”

Although he was self-centered, he understood that Takako was an ally and immediately suppressed his magic.

“Well, it can’t be helped, since you’re a Demon. You don’t need to worry about it, ok?”

“Muu...I’m sorry. You might already know, but my name is Menou. I thank you for protecting Alice-sama. If it is fine, will you give me your name?” (TN: he addresses Takako as a male equal here)

“You? Ah, Takako-san is a woman, you know.”

When Alice quickly mentioned that, Menou was stunned, saying “Ehh!?”

Menou looked at Takako multiple times, as if he refused to believe her.

He looked at Alice’s appearance and then compared it with Takako’s. He couldn’t believe that they were the same gender.

He then looked at Kagami before looking back at Takako. He still thought that she looked more similar to Kagami.

“I am Takako Vildar. Take care of me?”

He did not know whether she was offended at being called a male, but Takako was emitting a difficult aura, close to that of a queer, as she smiled. Takako’s voice was low, to the extent that he thought he was hallucinating.

“Ah...Uh, p-please excuse me. Takako-dono, is it? I am counting on you.”

Menou shook hands with Takako. No matter how he looked at it, he could only see a mass of muscles. However, she was still a benefactor who had protected Alice, so he held back his emotions.

“Let me give my thanks to ‘you’...no, Kagami-dono, and to ‘you’ once more. Allow me to express my gratitude for protecting Alice-sama.”

(TN: The first ‘you’ = Kisama, refers to Kagami. The second ‘you’ = Kiden, refers to Takako)

Menou exchanged another handshake with Takako and Kagami.

“Well then, for now, I want to talk about the journey’s plan...Is that fine?”

He nodded to Kagami, who was waving a map in one of his hands. Kagami spread the map on the ground and the four of them sat down around it.

“Normally it would be fine to go there directly, but since Menou’s magic leaks out, we will need to head towards the Demon King’s Castle while taking detours to keep him hidden...In that case, it will take 14 days, even if we hurry.”

“Wait, come to think of it, I don’t feel any magic power coming from Alice-sama. How is that possible?”

Kagami instructed Alice to turn her back to him, showing Menou the cloth ribbon that was wrapped around her horn.

“I do say, what is that cloth...?”

“It’s a cloth that was made by Kagami-san to suppress a Demon’s magic power. Thanks to this, I was able to enter a human town for the first time. It was really lively, you know? Balman town!”

Menou gazed at the cloth wrapped around Alice’s horn with a stunned look. He could sense a faint emission of magic power, but it was only for a moment. The magic power was immediately changed into something else and absorbed into the cloth.

“This is something that Kagami-dono made?”

“I just had a chance to do it. The materials are too rare though, so it could only be made once.”

“...You really don't hate Demons, huh. That's better...”

Before Menou could continue talking, Takako suddenly grabbed Alice and jumped backwards. Kagami and Menou jumped back in the same manner.

Immediately afterwards, a raging flame flew in at high speed and the map that they had been looking at instantly turned into ashes.

“Just as I thought. I knew that it was a bit strange.”

As if she was saying that it was useless to just hide themselves, one of the Hero's party members, Palna, appeared from behind one of the surrounding trees.

“I thought it was strange, since there were two shadows that fell from the Hell Crows last night.”

The next person to appear was Krul.

“To be together with Demons...I can't believe such a thing! You said that this child was your little sister but...as I thought, it was a Demon, wasn't it!”

The third one was Tina.

“You can't...talk your way out of this.”

The last person to come out of the cover of the surrounding trees was Rex.

“Don't wait for your turn to come out, you guys.”

Kagami replied, stunned, while muttering 'come out immediately' inside his heart.

Part 3

He then checked out his surroundings. There were four people amongst the surrounding trees, obstructing his view of an easy escape route. At the same time, the group of four were in a position that made it difficult for them to chase if Kagami's party tried to flee.

"If I may ask, why are you surrounding us?"

"Such a foolish question. We won't let you guys, who have allied with the Demons, run away."

Krul returned an answer without appearing in front of them, remaining in her position.

At that moment, with a speed that an ordinary person wouldn't be able to see, Kagami appeared in front of Krul. It was as if the movement was instantaneous and everyone there had their eyes wide open.

"This time is zero points, though I am only referring to the strategy that princess-sama had thought of."

As he said this, Kagami lightly chopped Krul's head, like he had done the other day. Krul blinked, unable to immediately understand what had happened to her.

"Although it's fine that the Hero's party has the courage to face a strong opponent, wouldn't it be better if you showed it only when you knew you had a chance of winning?"

"D-Don't ignore what I said! Besides, you guys are humans...If you kill us, you will automatically be labeled as criminals!"

"How idiotic. Although, it would certainly be that way if you were killed."

"Calling someone an idiot is rude!"

Krul responded to Kagami with an angry expression as her face turned bright red.

“It’s pointless for you to act strong when you can’t even be compared to your opponent. How would you overcome that weak-looking monk girl? That child is dangerous, right?”

The moment Kagami muttered this and let out a sigh with a ‘Well, Well’, Krul jumped backwards, as if she had realized something. Immediately afterwards, Kagami was attacked by a radiating Light Edge slash from behind.

However, since Kagami had grasped the direction and position of the sound that was cutting through the air, he easily avoided it by lightly twisting his waist.

“There’s no room to act. It’s not like we came to listen to your sermon!”

Within the brief moment that Kagami had dodged the attack, Rex, who had sent out that slash, closed in on him, as if chasing him. Unable to hit Kagami, Rex swung his sword downwards while shouting and Kagami showed him a troubled expression as he jumped backwards.

“You don’t have to tighten your defence. It’s not like I could run away?”

“You just told us that our formation is meaningless, right?”

Kagami slightly admired Rex for listening to his advice. He was brave and honest. No matter how much strength having the Role of a Hero gave to someone, Kagami felt like he understood that Rex could become stronger.

“Why are you attacking me~. You’ll be a criminal if you carelessly attack me and kill me, right~?”

“This here is the Princess. She’ll pardon me as much as I like this time...Besides, even if I were to kill Demons, I would not be labeled as a criminal!”

As Kagami continued to dodge backwards, he thought ‘he is petty in spirit’ about Rex, who continued his attacks. However, as the assault continued, he concluded that there had to be a limit. He grabbed the sword that was swung down at him with one of his hands and gazed at Rex with killing intent, as if he hated him.

This one glare sent chills down Rex’s spine, so he immediately let go of the sword that was grasped in Kagami’s hand and jumped backwards, lining up besides Krul.

“Tch...! You monster!”

Regardless of it only being an insignificant movement that wasn't enough to cause any real exhaustion, sweat was dripping down from Rex's forehead, almost like it was gushing out, and his breathing was haggard. He had already understood that Kagami was overwhelmingly powerful in comparison to him. Despite knowing that, he still thought 'If I fight any longer, I will die' towards the opponent, who had no weapons equipped. There was nothing but fear within him.

“A splendid monster. Leaving such a monster alone, would it be enjoyable even if he lets you go with him to defeat the Demon King?”

“The main problem is that the person over there said that he was a subordinate of the Demon King!”

After saying that, Tina walked over to Rex, who was standing there separated from the group, and cast Healing Magic on him, regardless of the fact that he hadn't received any external wounds.

“Aren't there victims from yesterday's attack? They should be overlooked just because the ringleader of the attackers is in front of you. What? I wonder if you are still using the excuse that you thrust the Blue Devil's horn into him?”

As Krul said this, she formed a giant magic circle with the size of an adult person, as if she was making up for the two of them that had slipped out of position, and immediately prepared to chant an attack.

Menou, who had seen this a little while ago, moved over to Kagami in a panic, pulled on his clothes with a wrinkled face, and whispered into his ear.

“What does she mean that Kagami-dono will advise them to depart on a trip to defeat Demon King-sama! Was Kagami-dono not an ally of Demon King-sama!?”

“Saying such and such doesn't really refer to that. I just don't understand how to refute the humans' claims. It's a fact that Demon do harm to humans.”

“B-But...!”

“But, just like the Magician Princess-san over there has said, it’s a fact that the town received a large amount of damage from the rampage yesterday, right? You also seemed to have been worried about it, so for now, go apologize.”

“W-Why must I apologize to the likes of those humans!? Us Demons were humiliated dozens of times by the humans in the attack this time, right!?”

Menou’s words did make sense, and Alice’s expression became slightly cloudy. Whether or not she realized this, Takako also seemingly became saddened. She put her hand onto Alice’s head, as if she was sharing her pain.

Although it was from a long distance, Menou, who was aware of Alice’s expression, also mumbled and avoided looking into her eyes, whether or not something was wrong. If the Demon King and Alice hoped to make peace with the humans, as he had heard from Kagami, he too should surely let that happen, but the fate of humans and Demons wouldn’t let them yield to one another.

“Whether or not you apologize isn’t the problem. There are humans who are cooperating with the Demons that attacked Balman yesterday...this is the biggest problem! You can’t avoid going to prison!”

As Rex yelled this, he pulled out one more sword from a sheath that was hung around his waist and poised it in front of him.

“I laughed because I won’t waste my breath on you, who won’t even attempt to listen to those whom I’m cooperating with.”

“There is no need to listen! Demons are evil! And you are evil for allying with them, you bastard!”

At those words, Kagami instantly moved in front of Rex with the reflexes in his body and grabbed onto the poised sword. Rex couldn’t do anything against Kagami, who had suddenly appeared in front of him, so he tried to jump backwards. That didn’t mean that he couldn’t move his body out of fear. Even if he tried to move the sword in his hand with all his power, it didn’t move in the slightest. Immediately afterwards, he switched his gaze from his sword to Kagami and unexpectedly became bewildered.

Kagami wasn’t glaring nor was he hateful; instead, he seemed rather sad.

Rex would understand if Kagami was angry about it, yet he couldn't understand the meaning of this expression with this timing.

"Why? Who decided that? How did it become like that? Did you thoroughly think about it?"

Kagami said some words that were difficult to comprehend as he had that expression.

"What do you mean by that?"

"The little sister over there that I pretended was mine...Does she appear to be a bad person?"

"What is it that you want to say!"

"I'll teach you, because I already know who that Demon is. She is the Demon King's daughter."

Everyone in the Hero's party had their eyes wide open as they stared at Alice's face. Sweat appeared on their foreheads as doubt mixed in and they muttered, "The Demon King's...daughter?"

"Princess-sama, certainly you had already said that it was fine to embrace the Demon King's daughter tightly yesterday, right?"

As he said this, Krul instantly had a clear impression of the events that had occurred yesterday in her mind. Certainly, there was an appearance of herself, who tried to relieve a girl who had seemed to be anxious at that point. At that point in time, Krul could only see that she was a girl who was fearful and hopeless upon seeing the Demon King Army.

"Did that girl look like a bad person to you?"

As he said this, Krul hesitated and averted her gaze without saying anything. Although she didn't want to recognize it, she couldn't have thought that the girl was bad at all. She had a sign of purity in her eyes, like that of a human girl, and she appeared too weak to do such a sinister thing.

Even if she saw her now, she couldn't think about it. She couldn't feel any ill intent at all from the seemingly sad look in the girl's eyes.

That girl over there was definitely just a simple girl.

"Certainly, Demons have caused harm to humans. However, even if a portion of that harm was removed, it wouldn't change anything for the humans. Demons are harmful. That's why I won't stop you guys from defeating the Demon King. But Demons are not bad. That's why I won't let my friends, who aren't bad Demons, get killed."

As he declared this, Kagami broke the sword he had grasped onto with a 'Bakin'.

Part 4

The tense atmosphere lingered for a while. Nobody spoke and, even though it was only a few seconds, it felt like much more time had passed.

“So...the Demon who came to attack the town isn’t bad?”

Tina asked before she knew it, as sweat poured down from her forehead. She stared at Kagami from behind Krul’s back due to fright. After staying silent for several seconds, Kagami looked at her expressionlessly and said,

“About that, hasn’t he already said he was truly sorry?”

Kagami’s words instantly broke the previously tense atmosphere.

“Eh...If that’s so, then us catching that person isn’t right...”

Tina muttered an unexpected response because of her bewilderment.

“No, that’s wrong. What I wanted to say was in regards to all the Demons who aren’t bad. Listen to them first, princess-sama.”

“They have no ears to listen with! Either way, that Demon attacked Balman. This is an indisputable fact! It’s enough of a reason to catch him!”

Although she had thought for a moment that her desire for revenge was wrong, Krul immediately began to cast Magic. At the same time, Palna began to form a magic circle. The man in front of her was weakening her resolve. He was a dangerous existence who drew out a portion of herself. Krul confirmed that with this exchange.

“Hold up, hold up! Look, humans also attack Demon towns, right? This attack is the same thing! There is no justice and evil in war, right? What I believe in is justice!”

“Under the justice we believe in, it’s natural to capture a person from an enemy country who came to attack, right?”

“Certainly! Well, still, listen to me. Although it’s true that he attacked, the condition of the Demon King is strange, so I will be going to investigate him. Look, although the

manner it was given in was too strange, it was in accordance to the King's order, and he is in a position where he can only follow it, as a servant."

Rex, Palna, and Krul grimaced at Kagami's vague words that were said without hesitation.

"The condition of the Demon King is strange? Exactly how is he strange?"

"It's strange to give out an order to attack a town, since the Demon King hopes to reconcile with humans. I decided to go to the Demon King's castle to confirm whether or not it was truly an order from the Demon King to attack the town yesterday, because it was suspicious. Since it is also on your mind, you guys should follow me. That's it."

Kagami's remarks seemed to be really foolish. Rex laughed loudly, Palna looked at him with pity, Tina made an uneven smile, and Krul burst out in laughter.

"Isn't the strange one you? The Demon King hopes to reconcile with humans? There is no reason to tell such an idiotic story, right? The Demon King is humanity's greatest enemy."

Krul replied back while full of confidence, regardless of whether her conclusion was correct. Rex gave a scornful smile, as if he consented with her.

"On what basis did you decide that on?"

However, Kagami didn't understand how she could show off such a confident expression.

"There are plenty of things to base it on. In the past, it was said that the Demon King was the one who created many Monsters all over the continent. Up until now...a countless number of people have been killed by monsters, and it also means that...the previous heroes knew that they would lose their life by challenging the Demon King, right?"

As he listened to their complaints, Kagami hung his head and sighed.

There was a countless number of times that he had cursed. However, everyone spoke back to him in unison and scorned Kagami, as if Rex was correct. They would, without

being discouraged, turn their eyes away and not listen about the present reality, even if they were complaining about the present relationship between Demons and humans in this strange world.

“It’s not the Demon King’s will to create Monsters, and isn’t it normal for him to fight back against people who are aiming for his life? It doesn’t make any sense to not kill an opponent who is trying to kill you. Using that as a basis to claim that he doesn’t want to reconcile...don’t be a slave to prejudice.”

“Pre...judice?”

“Since I have met the Demon King before, I can say that there wasn’t any malice behind the Demon King’s daughter’s hopes for reconciliation. The Demon King surely has no desire, at all, to eliminate humans. So, I can’t think that the attack this time was due to the Demon King’s will. I will go and confirm this.”

At that time, Rex approached Kagami with resentment, somehow feeling pressured, and grasped Kagami’s chest as he struck it violently.

“Shut up!”

A loud voice rang out and echoed throughout their surroundings.

“You said that you have met the Demon King? You said that the Demon King hopes to reconcile? Don’t spout bullshit! What do you...base it off of? It’s more likely that you were fooled by those lowly Demons!”

Kagami didn’t understand what Rex was so impatient about and only directed his sight towards him, who had violently struck him on the chest.

“Has the Demon King ever come to attack the town before now?”

That was all Kagami muttered.

At that moment, various events from the past began to run through Rex’s mind. The history of how many times Demon towns were destroyed, the massacre of Demons, and the existence of the country’s people who he knew looked up to him. Yet, the Demon King had never come to attack them. As for why this is, even without saying anything to Kagami, Rex had always understood it from long ago.

“If the Demon King were aware of this, there would have already been a war long ago. Besides, did you not think that there was a problem with having the Demon King’s Castle in a remote region, without any dungeons, making it easily targeted by humans from an island country like Hexal Doria?”

“Ah, I had also thought that was always a problem. He would not know what to do if we came to attack him.”

Tina, who had remained hidden behind Krul’s back, timidly uttered that, as if she were vaguely aware of it.

“Probably since it was a place that could suppress the influence of Monsters to a minimum. Although, it’s a good place that makes it difficult for humans to attack, because of the difference in height elevation...uuoh!”

The moment this was said, a massive Flame blade suddenly split into two and flew at Kagami in a straight line. Kagami, who realized this at the last moment, held onto Rex’s body, who was still holding onto his chest, and jumped away with him, evading it.

“It’s better for you to ignore him. You are being stupid...the Demon King is the enemy. There is a possibility that this man is being manipulated by the Demons. Pull yourself together, you guys!”

With a passing glance at Palna, Rex separated from Kagami’s chest, as if his eyes had finally woken up. He kicked Kagami up into the air and landed back on the ground after rotating once before wielding his remaining sword in one of his hands.

Although, at a glance, Krul and Tina appeared to be slightly lost, Palna’s face trembled and she strongly clenched her Staff as her fighting spirit flared up.

After Kagami saw Rex, who dropped down from the sky by kicking him, he muttered ‘Well, yeah’, with a disappointed look. Even if they could understand it, it didn’t change the fact that people had been hurt. They could end up killing him, regardless of whether he is evil or an ally, because it was easy to see this person as an enemy.

As for trying to understand each other, they would simply respond by saying that the damage would continue to be taken since they would preserve a portion of that harm. Kagami had also understood this, which was why he had given up.

“Well, Alice-tan, the path you want really is difficult.”

As such, Kagami laughed. He was just by himself the previous time he was accused. On the other hand, this time he had tried to step up by being an ally of the Demons. Clearly, there wasn't a reason to not expect something from this method of approach, which was different from before.

Now, he could confirm the severity of this path. Yet, he was able to laugh because he could measure the possibility of the path from Krul's response. The response clearly differed from previously. He couldn't feel any possibilities back then.

“Yosh, let's run away! We can surely run away easily now!”

Therefore, Kagami thought that he would **【Support that goal with all his might】** . First, he needed to head towards the existence that was becoming the number one obstacle. He grabbed Menou's collar and began to run.

Part 5

When she saw Kagami run, Takako immediately grabbed Alice and followed behind him.

“For him to run away is like saying that he admits it!”

“I’m only running away because you won’t listen to me! Let’s meet again.”

Kagami began to run towards the position that Rex had been hiding in as he sighed. They headed northeast of Balman, towards the Demon King’s Castle, which was located in Atros, one of the four countries.

“Kagami-dono, there is a carriage stopped ahead of here! Since we are heading towards the Demon King’s Castle, I secured it earlier, because I thought it would be necessary! Let’s go ride it.”

Menou yelled out to Kagami as he pushed his way towards him and pulled him along.

“A carriage...How did you secure it?”

“I seized it from one of the peddlers that were heading out of Balman.”

“Just as I was trying to convince the hero’s party that you aren’t a bad guy at all~. If I confirm the safety of the Demon King after going to his castle, it seems that I will have to hand you to the Hero’s party.”

“Whether I have one or two carriages, I’m still the guy who attacked the town. For me, the most important thing is to confirm the safety of the Demon King. Be at ease, I did not want to dishonor Kagami-dono, so I neither killed those peddlers nor deprived them of their goods. I only took their horse and their carriage.”

“Eh, but thanks to your actions, the Hero’s party found out about this place, didn’t they?”

“.....Ahh.”

Kagami proved that he had been aware of how he had conveniently been found out by the Hero's party. Although he considered flinging Menou away for a moment, Kagami resisted the desire and ran towards the wagon.

Kagami made a bitter expression when he saw the wagon.

Although two horses were on standby next to the wagon, which was designed to carry things and had a tent over it, no matter how he looked at it, they weren't horses at all. Their upper halves were part human. They were the Kenta-Uros.

"They should be thankful that you deprived them of such a thing."

Kagami muttered while placing a hand on his head and groaning, seeming to hate it from the bottom of his heart.

"Even though they seemed fine, since those Monsters were being used, I released them. Of course, those horses acknowledge me and will let me ride them."

As if to say that he was being praised, Menou was thrown inside of the carriage. Without needing to be reminded that they were in a situation where the Hero's party was catching up to them from behind, Kagami also climbed into the carriage.

Behind them was Takako, who seemed happy as she caught up with them, and Alice, who had been carried by her and seemed to be bored to death. They also got into the carriage.

"Time to depart! Start running! If we head straight to the west from the forest, we will surely come out of it!"

Although Kagami climbed into the carriage and tried to remain expressionless as he said that, the two Kenta-Uros desperately fixed their eyes onto him and yelled.

"Human, we are a noble existence."

"Ah, yes."

"We said that it is only the Demon who is allowed to ride us. As if we will let you guys, who are inferior beings, be carried. It will be forever shameful. Get lost."

The moment the Kenta-Uros said that, Takako made an appearance from inside the carriage, holding a whip. Kagami immediately moved over to Alice, and with a 'Kids shouldn't look at this!', he covered her eyes with his hands.

The carriage began to move with a blistering speed. With a 'Hohohohoh!' from Takako, a yell of 'nnaaaaaaah!' resounded from the Kenta-Uros. When Menou saw this scene, he pondered on whether it was a good thing that he had ridden a Hell Crow.

By the time the Hero party got there, the carriage using the two Kenta-Uros had already dashed away. If their Level was high, it was natural for them to be quick at running away. There wasn't any worry about the Hero party catching up if you thought about the distance the Kenta-Uros could travel with their inexhaustible stamina.

"Th-they ran away...!"

Tina muttered as she stopped and panted.

"C-Certainly...they said that they were heading towards the Demon King's Castle. If that's the case, they will surely stop by one of the towns along the way. Either way, their destination is the same. We will probably meet again somewhere."

Krul, who had chased them in the same way, muttered as she also stopped and panted. Behind her, Rex was calmly leaning against a tree and Palna was standing next to him, gazing coldly at the carriage that was dashing away.

"Do you resent them?"

Rex, who realized what she was gazing at, also looked at the fleeing carriage and asked Palna.

"It doesn't concern you. It's something unrelated to you."

Palna responded without looking into his eyes, and Rex muttered 'I see' back to her.

It didn't mean that Rex personally held resentment towards the Demons. It was just hatred for Monsters. He just couldn't recognize the existence that spawned them and called themselves Demons.

His reason was clear and simple. His parents had been killed by Monsters.

He deeply hated Monsters and he couldn't forgive those who called themselves Demons for continuing to spawn them. He thought that his existence was a divine revelation. A revelation that allowed him to be born with the role of a Hero. He then continued to develop his powers to fulfill that revelation. He had often thought of a world without Monsters. However, Kagami had said that there were also Demons who hoped to reconcile and didn't want to spawn more Monsters.

Although Demons were surely an existence that were meant to be killed in the same way as Monsters, he felt that it was wrong to kill Demons who wanted to reconcile. It was unavoidable, but that wouldn't change the fact that it would be a simple slaughter.

The annihilation of Demons was absolutely essential in order to exterminate those hated Monsters. However, the facts that 『Other than Demon no longer spawning Monsters, nothing will change for Humans』 and 『Even until now they have never tried to attack and eliminate humans』 weighed heavily on Rex's shoulders.

“It...can't be helped, huh.”

Rex confronted the reality that he felt had somehow evaded him, and his disgust towards Kagami increased further. Even though Kagami hadn't been given a revelation, he was strong, and this reality would always pit them against each other.

Even though Kagami hadn't said that he was excellent compared to himself, who was a hero, Rex didn't feel that it would be said.

Rather, he just had to feel as such to make it easy for him to attack, be it the Demon King Army or something evil. Monsters were hateful, yet Demons were...the Demon King.

“We're going, Rex. Princess-sama is saying that we should go and prepare a means of travel, so we will return to the town.”

Krul and Tina had already gone back so Palna spoke to Rex, who was thinking about something seriously.

“...You shouldn't worry about it.”

Palna turned around and began to walk ahead of him, returning to town.

“There is no need to worry.”

As she finished speaking, Palna continued to proceed to their original purpose.

The annihilation of Demons.

For Palna, who had her beloved person killed by Demons, things like Monsters made no difference to her.

Part 6

They were several kilometers to the west of Balman, in the middle of an empty plain. Beneath the clear and starry night sky, two humans and two demons were sitting around an open fire. It was the first friendly meeting between humans and demons.

Nevertheless, although they were en route to the Demon King's Castle, they had felt a necessity to set some rules, since they would be spending time together for a while.

Even with Menou's circumstances, Kagami and Alice concluded that his actions were bad this time, since the carriage he had plundered for their own convenience was something Kagami hadn't given the okay for beforehand.

"First, we must never do harm to humans. Conversely, even if they do harm to us, we must endure it. If, by any chance, that happens, only we can shield you. At the very least, I want you to follow this rule until I confirm the Demon King's true intentions."

"Muu...I understand. Sorry. Thanks to my own selfishness, I've put Kagami-dono into a dangerous position."

"It's fine as long as you understand it. If you sincerely apologize when we return to Balman and compensate them for the carriage, they will probably forgive you. As for the Hero's party...well, it will work out somehow."

As Kagami said this, Alice poured some tea, which had been heated by the fire, into the mug she was holding.

When Menou saw that she wasn't really worried about this, he let out a sigh of relief and relaxed, regaining his composure.

"For now, although we have to go to Atros Island in order to reach the Demon King's Castle, rather than continuing on our current route, wouldn't it be fine to go to the Freedom City Salumeria first?"

Takako spread out a map as she asked that.

The only land route that could be taken to cross over to the solitary island, Atros, went through a checkpoint that was to the northeast of Atros Island. There was no way to

go to Atros Island without passing through the coastal city, Fort Freedom City Salumeria.

Since the people who normally traveled to Atros Island were those who were aiming for the Monster Drops exclusive to Atros Island or those that were merely curious, usually only a few were invited.

Although the reason why so few humans were invited could be said to be due to the average Level of the Monsters being abnormally high, even if they went, they would need to take the land route through the Fort Freedom City Salumeria.

“Salumeria is that city that is surrounded with that big wall, right?”

“Oh yeah, that reminds me, Alice came from Atros Island, right? Was it by ship?”

“Yeah. Although it was a slight detour, we passed by without having to go through Salumeria, thanks to the ship being carried by everyone in the village. We weren’t attacked by Monsters.”

Alice smiled as she said that.

Neighboring Atros Island was the Fort Freedom City Salumeria, which had developed on the mainland of the Hexal Doria Kingdom. It acted as a barrier against the Monsters that were spawned by the giant amount of magic power released from the Demon King’s Castle. It was a city made so that those Monsters wouldn’t reach the mainland.

The city had an outer wall built around it that was 40 meters high, which protected against ordinary monsters, who could only stop in front of it.

Even if they could destroy the wall and go through it, the many skilled Adventurers who were staying in the Fort Freedom City wouldn’t allow it. The Monsters dropped raw materials for repairing goods and weapons that allowed people to attack at all times, and since manpower and food were required, it was a place that gathered the most merchants and Adventurers. It was also the most dangerous place in the whole country, due to the attacks by the highest level Monsters and beings like the Demon King.

Yet, the Demon King’s Castle and Salumeria stood together. Those who went to attack the Demon King’s Castle, without having enough power to defeat the Demon King,

thought that it was useless to attack it and continued to lose, so the Demon King had never shown any desire to march on Salumeria at all.

“Menou, that reminds me, since you attacked Balman, has Salumeria been attacked too?”

“Of course. The goal of our declaration was the same with Balman. They seemed to be dumbfounded, but a full scale march will surely begin before long. If that happens...the first one to be targeted will be...”

“Salumeria...?”

Kagami sighed as he said that.

It was enough for it to be called a Fort City. Although he didn't think that it would fall so easily, it was clear that he had to hurry or the situation would become irreversible. Kagami ended up being worried on what to do and glanced at Alice with an anxious look before directing his gaze at the Kenta-Uros.

The Kenta-Uros, who were standing beside the carriage and devouring vegetables as if it were a pastry snack, looked back at him with disgust.

“What to do. I'd like to seriously request the favor of not riding them on the trip.”

Kagami said that with a serious look. Although he understood that they needed to hurry, he was caught in the dilemma of not wanting to ride them, no matter what.

“Seriously, Kagami-chan's an idiot~ A real idiot~ What will you do if you don't think about the consequences. Even though we will be heading to the Demon King's Castle from here. Just how much distance do you think there is?”

Takako muttered back to Kagami as if she were pitying him.

“That's right, Kagami-dono! We have to head towards Demon King-sama as quickly as possible and confirm his true intentions! We have to get information on his actions that are different from the ideals that Alice-sama speaks of! It's just as Takako-dono said! It's foolish to throw away our means of travel!”

Alice disagreed with what Menou said as she watched over the three with a slightly worried look. At least, she didn't want to ride on the Kenta-Uros if possible.

"But aren't those guys dangerous? I don't know what's dangerous anymore. It'll be really annoying to suddenly be betrayed and attacked."

Menou and Alice tilted their heads, as if doubtful of his words.

"There's no need to worry about if we can control them. I have confidence that we can."

Takako replied back to Kagami with a 'Fufun' as she smiled.

"U-Um...Kagami-san, what do you mean by being betrayed?"

Alice timidly asked, since it was only natural for her to be worried. Kagami gazed at the Kenta-Uros and asked, "Now, how many points is this Demon Uncle?"

"Five points. Although he is a Demon, he isn't a match for us. I feel some elegance from that Demon girl...20 points. The large human man over there is easily...two points."

As if the Kenta-Uros looked down on each of them, he sniffed, and after looking at the party he moistened his tongue and began to point at them one by one as he assessed them.

"The Kenta-Uros have an assessment of 100 points to -100 points. If their assessment of you becomes -100, you will be treated like an ordinary Monster and will get attacked."

Kagami said that as if it were completely natural, and Menou, without thinking, raised his voice with a "Hah!?"

Kenta-Uros were persistent Monsters. Although they were special Monsters that had the same intelligence as humans and Demons, they would be careful not to attack sensible humans, in order to get merits for themselves. If it was decided that there were downsides greater than the merit of them 'getting whipped', the Kenta-Uros would attack you.

It was only at this time that their M-side would disappear, and because they would suddenly betray and attack you, it was extremely dangerous. To make matters worse, they had a high Level of 64 for a Monster. If one wanted to deal with Kenta-Uros, a routine whipping was necessary.

“However, when their assessment is in the plus, they leave it as it is. Since they take out their trump card and increase their minus points two-fold without blurting out so much as a ‘double up’, if you let your guard down, it will become really low.”

“Wow...”

Alice muttered back as she made a sour face at the truth that Kagami eagerly revealed. Although Alice, at least, heard that their trump card would be pulled out from somewhere, Kagami tried not to talk about that and remained expressionless.

“By the way, how many points am I at right now?”

“-50.”

“Waaaaaah...!”

Before he knew it, the minus mark he received became a ‘double up’ and, unable to withstand the humiliation, Kagami unintentionally raised his voice, as if he was a frog that ribbited with regret.

“By the way, what happens when their assessment becomes +100, Kagami-san?”

“They will let you ride them.”

“Throw them away.”

Alice admitted defeat with a blank look and no doubt could be seen at all. However, their current situation was that they had to hurry along, and since they would enter Salumeria, they needed to hide Menou. They had the carriage and a Blue Devil’s horn, so they would continue to use the Kenta-Uros. Kagami would, to the best of his ability, avoid allowing his figure to be seen by them.

By the way, Takako was the driver.

Part 7

Although they headed towards Salumeria, they took detours to steer clear of any cities along the way, since Menou's magic power was leaking out, and kept him hidden inside the carriage. Contrary to their expectations, due the Kenta-Uros' abnormal Stamina and Power, they arrived at Salumeria in five days, without any problems.

"It's finally in sight...how nostalgic."

Takako muttered as if she felt a deep emotion from something that happened long ago. Alice, who was riding on the carriage, also reacted, saying "Wow.....!", and appeared from inside the carriage after they finally arrived with a smile and high expectations of what was inside Salumeria.

Kagami, who had already been there many times, and Menou, who had seen it from the sky countless times, didn't direct their expressionless gazes at Salumeria but at Takako. Afterall, the sight of her was more amazing than Salumeria.

By the time they arrived at Salumeria, Takako was no longer driving the carriage. Instead, she was riding on the back of the Kenta-Uros. The oddity of this sight could no longer be described with words.

"Still, it's surprising that it was such a smooth journey. I thought there would be more trouble."

Kagami muttered sleepily before they drew near the giant gate in front of them.

"Even if we encountered humans, they would have been deceived, and if Monsters appeared, Kagami-dono and Takako-dono would have defeated them in an instant."

"Well, wouldn't it be a hindrance to have the Demon King Army appear before us? Something like one of the Four Heavenly Kings appearing and saying 『We won't allow you to go into the Demon King's Castle!』 That's what happens in manga, isn't it?"

“The Demon King’s Army has a different goal, so they won’t try to defeat us or have a reason to come here. However, the Hero’s party may attack us...By the way, Kagami-dono, what’s a manga?”

“I’ll tell you about it after we’re finished with what we’re doing.”

“Really? Kagami-Dono! Well...but, if the Demon King Army is really moving according to the Demon King’s will...Gunuu...What should I do?”

Kagami unwittingly smiled when he saw Menou’s distress while saying that.

“It’s fine to not worry about it right now. Just think about it when the time comes.”

At least, Menou was fine with learning about manga in the future. Even if he knew only that, it was enough for Kagami to be perfectly satisfied. At the same time, the shy Alice smiled as she looked at Menou and Kagami.

“Menou-chan, it’s about time to hide your face so please wear that cloth. Be careful to never show your face while we’re in the city.”

“A-Ah. Sorry Takako-dono.”

Receiving Takako’s pointer, Menou put on the cloth to hide his face inside the carriage.

At the very last moment, Menou faced Alice and muttered, “Don’t worry about it, have fun”, and Alice happily replied back with a “Yeah!”

“Let’s go inside~”

They approached one of the two gates located on the east and west side of Salumeria, which was surrounded by the giant wall. As they arrived at the East Gate, Takako called out one more time to confirm their entry into the city.

The East Gate was always open to everyone, even if a giant Dragon was passing by; in case a dangerous and suspicious person tried to pass through, the Fort City’s exclusive gatekeepers were stationed in front of the gate. Since they stood on the east side to stop any nearby monsters from entering, one could generally pass through without being stopped.

As for the Kenta-Uros, there were very few merchants who handled them, and since they were well known for not being dangerous, it was normal for them to not be stopped.

“Wait a minute. You...are suspicious, where did you come from?”

One of the gatekeepers looked at them, since there was a woman that looked like a muscular man riding on top of a Kenta-Uros that was pulling the carriage, and stopped them just as they tried to pass through.

Kagami, who had thought this would happen, got off the carriage as he sighed.

When Takako directed a look full of killing intent at the gatekeeper, despite not understanding that they were stopped, Kagami immediately forced his way in between them and intervened, since the two of them weren't paying attention to him.

“We're Adventurers who came from Balman with some goods. There's nothing suspicious about us.”

After Kagami says this, he displays a portion of his Status Window, which showed that he was a human who hadn't committed any crimes. He then began to move while snarling, as if he was considering something and the gatekeeper, who saw this, showed a look of distrust.

“...Hm? Strange. What's inside the carriage? I can feel something like a Demon's magic power?”

“Just my little sister and the Blue Devil horn we picked up along the way here. We obtained a large quantity of it. Since there wasn't anything to store it in, it was placed out in the open.”

They had decided the method of dealing with this kind of development before they were stopped, and Alice appeared from within the carriage while holding a Blue Devil horn in one of her hands. It flickered in the gatekeeper's eyes, as if it were being reflected.

“Little sister...? She appears to be quite young...Can she fight?”

“She doesn’t really fight. Originally, she was brought along because she said she wanted to go to Salumeria. She only joined us for sightseeing. Look, this city is one of the most bustling places in the country, right?”

Listening to Kagami, the gatekeeper gazed at Alice, who appeared from the carriage, with suspicion. But, after Alice showed him a smile for a while, he concluded that there was no harm and signaled them to continue along by moving his neck.

“Sorry for stopping you. If the purpose is sightseeing, then please go enjoy it. We’re now in the midst of grand festivities. Things like parades are happening everyday.”

Beside them was Takako, who began to move into the city as she instructed the Kenta-Uros, and as she tried to continue along, Kagami came to a halt as the Gatekeeper said that.

Kagami, who had originally visited Salumeria countless times, tilted his neck towards the Gatekeeper with confusion as he listened to the word ‘parade’, which stopped him.

“A parade? At a time like this?”

Even if Salumeria was the liveliest city within the country, it was strange to have festivities on the scale of a parade everyday, since they usually only happened two or three times a year.

Events like parades were used to try and liven things up throughout the whole city, although there was no need to put on that much of a performance and occupy the city’s main street, even if it was the anniversary of Salumeria’s founding day.

“It’s about what happened the other day. There were guys who spoke about the Demons of the Demon King Army beginning their invasion without any news at all, and although Salumeria had already been attacked several times...The whole battle was a complete victory! With the Demon King, as well as the Demon King Army, being seen as a trivial threat now, a large scale Demon King subjugation unit is being formed. The parade is a preparatory celebration to pray for good luck for those who are going out to fight.”

Hearing that, Kagami’s expression slightly stiffened.

“That...When will the Demon King Army Subjugation Unit depart?”

“Tomorrow. They were honoring the Warriors yesterday, and today those volunteering to fight decided to depart tomorrow morning. When they come back from subjugating the Demon King, there will be another parade. You won’t be bored if you stay in this city for a while, you know?”

As things had progressed significantly further than what he had thought, Kagami rushed to where Takako was, his back facing the Gatekeeper, as his expression became cloudy and restless. Even if the Demon King Subjugators headed towards Demon King’s Castle now, Kagami was convinced they would either be totally annihilated or, at the very best, return back half-empty.

Part 8

In the first place, Monsters weren't required to put in effort to grow and get stronger like humans.

Monsters were at a high level the moment they were born. Although there weren't many Spawn Block dungeons that spawned Monsters on Atros Island, the Monsters that were born there all had high levels.

Additionally, the number of these Monsters could be increased by any amount if the Demons became worried about an attack. Although there hadn't been a need to increase the number of Monsters until now, if the Monsters were being treated as tools of an invasion, the Demons would doubtlessly mass produce Monsters.

If the invasions until now were just a diversion, there was a possibility that the Demons were holding back a large number of Monsters, in order to conduct a full-scale invasion on the nation of Hexal Doria as a whole. There was still the Demon King as well, who was said to have defeated 100 human Adventurers, who had all been under Level 100 and banded together in order to fight him.

If their goal was to defeat the Demon King, it was fine to venture into the Demon King's Castle with a small number of humans who specialized in assassination, but that wouldn't be possible if their opponent was the Demon King Army.

Although Kagami didn't think that the Adventurers in Salumeria were weak, their chance of winning was low. If one thought about trying to oppose overwhelmingly strong warriors that couldn't be killed, the number of Adventurers in Salumeria wasn't enough.

"But, I wonder if there's no other way but to go to that place we visited earlier? As long as the people in Salumeria don't lose their will to fight, won't they eventually go attack them?"

"This is my plan. First, after sneaking into the Demon King's Castle, we will meet with the Demon King. After listening to his situation, we stop the Demon King Army by persuading them, then run away with all of the Demon guys. Flawless, I know."

Takako let out a sigh and snorted at the shallowness of the plan that Kagami was so eager about.

“Listen...What would you do if the Demon King wants to attack humans? We will have to make up our minds at that point in time, right? It’s useless to live on while demons who want to try and eliminate humans remain.”

As Alice and Menou, who were inside of the carriage, listened to the conversation of the two who were walking outside of the carriage, their expressions grew clouded.

If that did happen, it would be necessary for Alice and Menou to consider what to do and prepare themselves. Although Menou didn’t have any plans on fighting in order to defeat the humans, unlike previously when he had been in the Demon King Army, he couldn’t think of ever becoming an enemy of Kagami and Takako. It wasn’t because their true abilities were high, but because, despite the short time they had spent together, he thought that Takako and Kagami were good people. After spending so much time with them, he knew that they did not hate Demons..

At that time, Alice, too, would have to give up on becoming friends with humans. However, whenever she thought of opposing Takako and Kagami, she felt a pain in her chest.

“I’ll also accept that fate at that time and prepare myself for the worst. However, only as the Third Army.”

Kagami’s remark made the two’s eyes spin.

“Third Army? What is that?”

“The Demon King Army, the Human Army, and the Coexistence Army with Demons and humans. I’ll enter it. People like Alice and Takako-chan are in it. Surely they will gather, to some extent. They will resist the others without fighting and compromise with them if possible.”

After listening to this, Alice smiled, as if she were relieved.

“Yes, yes~ I also want to enter that army!”

Alice cheerfully raised her hand and said that as she made her appearance from inside the carriage.

“Oh? Well, I planned that for you...is it fine? Even if you oppose your father?”

“Although I would hate to fight with my father...it’s fine. The present is different. Even though I had thought of trying it before, my father hadn’t built friendly relations with any humans. Since I’m now together with Kagami-san’s group, I want to try it.”

“Ku, such a cute girl. I’ll buy you some candy later, okay?”

Kagami gave her a thumbs up as a ‘good sign’ when he heard Alice, who was beaming with joy, say that.

Seeing the two of them, Takako muttered ‘If that’s so, I’ll also enter it for you’ as she smiled. Meanwhile, inside the carriage, Menou was distressed.

Despite having already decided on what to do, he had been thinking of distressful things like “It’s absolutely wrong to betray Demon King-sama, but if Alice-sama, who is the daughter of the Demon King, is there, this will be...!”

“If you apologized to humans by placing your head onto the ground, there would be no need for you to enter that Army, since you are friends with Takako, Menou.”

“Ah, I’ll have to pass on that. Please return to your post.”

“...Minus seven points.”

Kagami’s group entered Salumeria as they spoke about such things.

At that moment, they forgot that Alice was still talking and their mouths dropped open, due to their surprise at the overwhelming sight.

Contrary to the dreary outer walls, the dimensions inside the city were nothing like what they had seen until now. Seemingly new, well-kept houses were lined up in their view, and the scenery that spread out before them made it seem like it was a town of human nobles that had only ever been heard of in books about Demons.

The streets were wide, to the extent that they could clearly understand that the houses were spread out for several kilometers, and that every street was full of people. There were a large number of merchants running their own stalls, and there

appeared to be Adventurers amongst them, although they seemed like regular commonfolk.

Although Alice had been impressed by the scenery in Balman, she was much more impressed by this.

It wasn't just merchants who had their stalls open on the streets. There were also houses lined up here and there, letting out a nice aroma that made one's stomach growl without thinking, and since there were lots of people going in and out of them, they could understand that the buildings that looked like houses were being managed in some way.

Despite the fact that there were so many people, it seemed like the spaciousness of this town hadn't just been a tale, since they didn't feel that it was narrow like Balman. Surely the Fort City Salumeria had used up all of the land that existed between Atros Island and the mainland of Hexal Doria.

A moat that was connected to the sea could be seen here and there within the city. Clear, pristine water was flowing inside of it, and a sense of freshness was drifting in the air.

"Your mouth is so wide open, and this is just a normal street. The main street, which is holding the parade, is wider, you know?"

"Amazing...It's amazing, Kagami-san!"

Unfortunately, they weren't free to leisurely stay in Salumeria, so Kagami's group aimed for Salumeria's west gate, which had the other exit and entrance. Alice, whose eyes had been shining, dropped her expression and became slightly regretful, as though it was unfortunate.

"Well, I told you not to make such a face. No matter what result it will become, after this is over, it's fine for you to come again."

Kagami lightly chopped her head, as if it was meant to calm her down, when he saw her expression and showed her a smile to make her feel relieved. The shy Alice immediately smiled back and said 'Yeah!' with a big voice as those feelings disappeared.

“Ugh, I’ve given up hope.”

After half an hour, Kagami’s group dawdled and idly wasted their time on top of their beds in one of the many inns inside Salumeria.

Part 9

Outside of the inn, the Kenta-Uros were devouring rose-shaped broccoli and Menou was waiting on standby, wearing the cloth, as he chewed his bread.

“We don’t know when the Demon King Army will come to attack again, so the west gate will probably be completely sealed off until the Demon King Army Subjugation Unit leaves.”

Takako let out a sigh of dissatisfaction as she said that, while holding a tea cup and sitting in her chair elegantly. Kagami and Alice were rolling about idly on their beds.

Kagami’s group had headed towards the west gate but they were unfortunately sent back by the gatekeepers who were there. They tried to persuade them many times, but the gatekeepers refused to open the gate for them, replying with a ‘Wait until tomorrow.’

Although they said it would normally be fine for them to briefly open and close the gate, it seemed that several Monsters were already surging forward. Even though there weren’t enough of them for it to be an invasion, opening the gate would cause damage, so they were sent back.

“Though I could end it by going out for a little bit and beating the crap out of all of them...”

“It’s impossible. No matter how strong Kagami-chan is, they can’t think of shouldering the risk of danger if the gate is opened. Either way, if you had the authority to make those guys change their decision, there probably wouldn’t be gatekeepers there.”

“Ueeh, my only choice is to do a ‘Super Dash’ as they open the gate tomorrow.”

Alice was unable to contain herself while listening to the two of them speak, so, in order to calm down her heart, she rolled around on top of her bed, imitating Kagami.

“Can’t calm down?”

Kagami asked when he saw her.

“Not really. But, I can’t help being worried...right?”

Kagami stared at Alice, who showed him a smile as she idly rolled around.

Although she certainly was restless, she was somehow relieved. While Kagami was idly stuck at the inn, she had somehow managed to understand the situation they were in without asking him. At least, Kagami wouldn’t take it easy as long as he hadn’t given up. This was proof for her trust, which would make Alice do her best. However, since she couldn’t calm down, she was idling about.

“You understand it well. When it can’t be helped, it’s fine to act after figuring out the best course of action. In this case, it’s fine to arrive a day later. Although I wanted to go quickly, considering that event...Since the Demon King Army Subjugation Unit is taking action as a group, they will need to take time to arrive there.”

He added ‘I don’t think that the situation will be greatly changed we delayed our departure by just one day’. Kagami then began to relax again and rolled around on his bed without restraint.

“Hey, Kagami-chan, since you’re a bad influence on Alice, please stop her shameless imitations.”

“No, no, this is an amazing resting action which will let you relax, including your heart and mind, right? It’s the Long-Awaited Plans Modification. No, is it as planned? It means that I’ll rest my body as much as possible, since it’s been decided that we’ll be resting for a day. I’d rather want to take a chance with this skill.”

“Jeez. If you’re bored, wouldn’t it be fine to walk around the city? They’re also holding a Parade, so why don’t the two of you go there? Anyhow, it doesn’t matter what you do until tomorrow.”

Takako brought the teacup back up to her mouth and let out a sigh, as if in a trance, as she said “Ara...this black tea is quite delicious.” Kagami made a grim face when he saw her.

“I see. Certainly, it seems easier to relax outside like this.”

Kagami, who received a bit of mental damage and didn’t want to take any more, accepted Takako’s proposal and stood up, getting off of the bed.

“Takako-chan won’t come?”

“I’ll pass on it. Menou appears to be cute when he’s alone, so as long as we have this black tea, there will be plenty of enjoyment here...The two of you seem like you will enjoy it. Kagami-chan also likes festivities, right?”

Kagami scratched his head as if embarrassed. Although he was complaining from the bottom of his heart, thinking ‘Even though I’m no longer at an age where I can really enjoy Parades’, as if he was being treated like a child, Takako had experience with handling people and knew that he was like a child, despite him being 27 years old, so he didn’t say anything.

“Yosh, shall we go?”

As Kagami said that, he pulled up Alice, who had been lying down on the bed, as if it were natural.

Although Alice looked at Kagami like she was in a daze, when she was aware that his actions were close to being intimate, she immediately grasped his hand and, with a ‘Yeah!’, smiled as she left the room together with him.

“A world where it’s possible to take the hand of a Demon...? It might not be a dream.”

Takako muttered in a low voice as she watched the two of them rush out of the inn and head towards the city’s main street from the bay windows. When Kagami had opened the door to her bar, which had nobody at its entrance, and said ‘Leave the escort of the Demons to me’ at Balman, she had thought that something was wrong. She now clearly understood the feelings of the man who had previously not wanted to cooperate with her and only had a hobby of collecting gold.

“Well, if he and the Monsters understood each other, it would be even more simpler than trying it with Demons.”

She said that with a smile as she picked up one of the whips that were placed on top of the table. After placing the teacup on top of the table, Takako also left the room, with the goal of securing food supplies for their newly added companions.

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“Ice cream...Exactly what type of food is ice cream!?”

“Calm down, Alice-tan. If you want to eat some ice cream, you need to remember the correct way to eat it. You don’t want to become a genuine Pastry Terrorist like me, do you?”

“Pastry Terrorist...I want a second name too!”

After they left the inn, Kagami and Alice, who returned to the city’s street, tried to refresh themselves with a meal.

After listening to what Alice wanted to eat, since when they had eaten the black beef previously, Kagami had said that they could only eat it at a human town, they headed towards a restaurant. As they walked, Kagami taught her his favorite foods one by one.

“There is a way to eat ice cream by sinking your teeth into it with a ‘Paku’, but it’s said to be embarrassing, since it’s childish, so that’s no good. That is heresy. The true way to enjoy it is to savor the ice cream one lick at a time, with a ‘Peropero’. There’s a lot of adults who don’t understand this, you know? It’s useless for Alice to become that kind of an adult.”

“Enjoying it...by savoring it one lick at a time. Yeah, I understand, Kagami-san!”

“Well, that’s only after dinner, for dessert. The meal is usually spaghetti...”

The moment Kagami entered a store that had pictures of Pasta hanging from a sign, he stopped what he was saying with a ‘Wow~...’. His expression turned bitter, as if he had seen something that he didn’t want to see.

Kagami could see four people sitting at a table inside of the store, enjoying the aroma with a relaxed look. Rex was vigorously stuffing food down his throat, Krul and Tina were eating classy food, and Palna was raising a coffee cup that had been brought out to her mouth.

Shortly after, a healthy waitress lady called out to Kagami with a ‘Welcome~’. Sure enough, when Rex reacted to her voice and looked at the entrance for a moment, he realized that it was Kagami and spat out his pasta.

Part 10

“Hey...so messy, Rex. Let Kuu-chan teach you how to eat.”

Tina and Krul’s eyes popped out in astonishment when they saw Rex suddenly spit out his food, while Palna was disgusted. Rex immediately apologized with a ‘Sorry’ and wiped his mouth with one of the provided napkins.

“How many people?”

Kagami firmly gazed at them with an empty face, as if he had discovered something annoying when he saw such a scene, while he was being welcomed by the waitress.

“Zero. Thanks for the meal.”

After Kagami replied with that, he made an about-face and tried to leave the store, grabbing the doorknob at the entrance with his hand and pulling Alice along. However, as he tried to leave with the words ‘Ah, I’m full with just the aroma~’, before he could take one step outside of the store, he was forcibly grabbed by the shoulder. Rex was standing behind him with a smile that seemed to be saying ‘I got you’.

“He’s with me. I’ll guide him in, so it’s fine for you to stop there.”

“Yes sir. Please seat yourself and I will immediately bring a glass of water.”

After Rex said that, the waitress politely bowed her head and hurriedly disappeared behind the counter. Rex continued to silently stare at Kagami and, after glancing at Alice once, moved his head, as if telling them to follow him, and walked towards the table with Krul’s group.

After they realized why Rex had stood up from his seat, Tina and Palna stared angrily at Kagami, with slightly furrowed brows. When Krul noticed the change in their appearance, she finally realized that he was Kagami.

However, Kagami ignored them and left the store, taking Alice with him.

“AaaaAAAH! They ran away againnnn!”

Tina immediately rose and pointed at them as she cried out.

“But, is it normal for them to run away in this situation? Just how much of a fool is that villager going to make out of us!”

The moment Kagami fled right before her eyes, Palna jumped out of her seat and chased after him.

Rex had decided, with great pain, to cool off by shaking his head, so when he saw Palna chase after Kagami, he made a confused expression and said ‘Eh?’, as if he didn’t understand what had occurred.

“Hero-sama should also quickly chase after him! I’ll pay for everything!”

Tina shouted at Rex, who was standing still, as if he didn’t understand the situation. He finally began to chase after Kagami when he understood that Kagami had run away. When he got out of the store, he saw Palna, who had her arms folded and had a bitter expression, as if she were sullen.

“He escaped. That Villager’s legs are too quick! Jeez...What the hell were you doing, Rex!”

“Don’t panic. Even if the only thing we know is that they’re still in this city, isn’t that plenty?”

As they were looking at their surroundings that were devoid of the Villager, discouraged and at a loss of what to do, Krul and Tina left the store after paying the bill and reunited with them.

“It was worth it to let the horses run quickly so we could arrive before the Demon King Army moved. At the very least, that Villager who has a connection with the Demon King surely won’t head out of the city until tomorrow.”

“So what? What will you do? We will also join the Demon King Army Subjugation Unit, right? We only have to until tomorrow to find him. Where do you plan to look inside this huge city?”

Palna approached Rex as she said that, as if charging him with the responsibility of letting Kagami run away. Sweat dripped down Rex's forehead as he hadn't thought of a good plan to search for Kagami within this huge city.

"It's fine if the residents of this city search for him. If we tell them that a Demon has entered the city and tell them it's features, they will certainly find them tomorrow morning."

"Then, let's stop for now."

Regardless of whether this plan was a good idea or not, Rex immediately replied to Palna, who had said that confidently, with a serious look. These unexpected words caused Palna to furrow her brows for a moment, seeming unhappy, and glared at Rex.

"Although I understand your feelings, the ones who would be at a disadvantage by cornering them is us."

"What do you mean by that?"

When Rex said that, as if he were trying to calm down Palna, Tina asked for the meaning of his words while tilting her small head.

"HE is a monster. Although I don't want to admit it...he's strong to the extent that people like us wouldn't be his opponents, if you think about it. I don't know how things would turn out, even if he was driven into a corner. He might choose to run from this city."

Whether or not he was confident that such a situation would happen, Rex said that with a regretful look.

"I see...the cityfolk would rampage while trying to find him and it might get dangerous."

"I don't think that's it."

Similarly, Krul interfered with their conversation while looking sad, as if she was convinced that it might be the case.

“If we were the ones who cornered him by rampaging, we surely would have faced danger a long time ago. Although they are insolent people who protect Demons...I don't think they are bad.”

Palna sighed in amazement at Krul's words.

“Kuu-chan, you...do you understand what you're saying? He is an ally of Demons, right? With a Demon that attacked Balman, no less. Who cares if he's not a bad person?”

“It's true that I don't know his intentions. However...he did talk with us.”

“So what?”

“Instead of counterattacking us, who didn't understand his ideals, he opted to escape. At least, I don't think he is trying to force his ideals onto us to try and make us understand. He just wants us to understand him...I think he is such a person.”

Palna stayed silent as she thought of unpleasant things in her heart in response to Krul's expression and words, who appeared to be distressed about the situation.

“Even with his standing as a Villager, he gets angry, as if he were being looked down on...”

Rex muttered with a dissatisfied look, whether or not he understood it in the same way.

“If that's so...then why are we chasing after that Villager? That child...seems to be the Demon King's daughter, and whether or not he handed over that Demon, I thought that we would catch that Villager in order to mark him as a criminal. In any case, if we already know that it's useless to catch him, isn't it fine to leave them alone?”

“Of course, our number one goal is to defeat the Demon King. It won't change the fact that Demons are existences that must be defeated. However, I am genuinely worried about whether he is an ally of Demons. Just from the way he speaks as if he is always worried about us, we don't know what he is thinking.”

Tina muttered, “Now that you mention it, he always just leaves us hints and doesn't answer us, saying ‘Try realizing it yourself!’ and such”, in admiration of Krul's words.

“What do you know? What if he is allying with Demons, who are planning something? Since he has reached such a powerful state, he may be aware of their plans. I think he has something that we don’t know about.”

Dissatisfied, Palna muttered ‘What would you do if he knows’ towards Krul as she gazed directly into her eyes, and then turned her head a second time as she sighed.

“Although we’ve thought of various things...these few days, whether or not those thoughts are expressed, I want to properly listen to him. This time, it will be formal, since I’ve calmed down.”

“I, too, have things I want to ask.”

Rex muttered as if he approved of her decision.

“But, there is no need to persist against that guy. Our goal of defeating the Demon King won’t change, after all. With the current situation of the Demon King Army invading, this won’t cause us to waver. It doesn’t matter, even if we leave one or two Demons alone.”

“What? It couldn’t be that Rex is going to suggest a plan where we do not defeat Demons?”

Palna approached Rex while staring when she heard his words, which were different from the past, when he had bared his fangs with the most hostility in the group. However, Rex laughed at Palna’s question.

“Is there such an excuse? Since we have things we want to ask, we only need to search for him. If we don’t find him before tomorrow, it’s fine to leave him alone for the moment. Anyways, let’s form parties and search for him as we describe what those two look like.”

As Palna said ‘My, my’ as if she were slightly relieved, she acknowledged his proposal.

“Though, Hero-sama will be forgiven if you work with us and don’t run away.”

“Gu...about that...sorry.”

In the end, they continued to walk as they headed towards the city's main street in order to search for Kagami, who was hiding somewhere in Salumeria, as Rex hung his head at Tina's harsh words.

Part 11

“I wonder if it was a good idea...running away from them.”

“I already said that it’s fine, it was a bad situation because they were cautious. Besides, if you were caught, it would have become an unreasonably annoying situation, you know? Those guys won’t listen to us properly.”

After leaving the shop, Kagami picked up Alice and ran away using his full strength until they arrived at a section of the main street. Rather than walking as before, the people on the street were going to and fro rather forcefully, and it had become a situation where it was easy to mix in with the crowd and hide.

Kagami was deep inside one of the side streets, within the vicinity of the main street, and thanks to the people who were gathered to watch the parade, the main street had been packed with many people, to the point that Kagami couldn’t be picked out.

Meanwhile, Kagami bought a hot dog at a nearby stall, which he handed to Alice.

“We’ll have spaghetti another time. Please bear with what happened today.”

“Thank you, Kagami-san...What is this? What do you call this?”

“Ah? You don’t know what a hot dog is either? It’s a simple food that has a sausage placed in a bun. Though the types of vegetables and sauces you put on it depends on the stand.”

After Alice listened to his explanation, she muttered ‘Hee~’ as if she was impressed, and then she opened her mouth widely, digging into the hot dog. At that moment, she widened her now sparkling eyes, and with a blistering speed, she chewed and swallowed it. After looking at Kagami, she replied with “It’s really delicious!”

Seeing Alice begin vigorously eating the hot dog like a hamster, Kagami unintentionally revealed a smile. Even though it was something he had grown accustomed to eating everyday, after seeing her eat it happily and call it delicious, he realized that this pleasure was different than usual. While he thought about that, Kagami also began to dig into his hot dog, just like Alice.

“Fuah~ Thanks for the meal.”

“You’re a quick eater. You ate it just like a hamster.”

“But it was so good.”

As he said this, he noticed Alice showing him a satisfied smile, and then Kagami also sighed, as if he were satisfied in the same way. Afterwards, he saw his own hotdog that he’d just bit into and felt bad about having her wait for him to finish, so he ordered ice cream from the stall for Alice. After he muttered ‘This is what I talked about,’ when he handed it over, Alice’s eye glittered once again. Since the ice cream was swirled into a spiral on top of the cone, she began to lick it elegantly like Kagami described.

“What do you guys normally eat as Demons? Don’t you get to eat good food since you’re the Demon King’s daughter?”

“There isn’t a need to worry about food. Normally it’s something like vegetables...sometimes boar and deer meat? But, because there are little to no seasonings, there aren’t that many variations. The food in human towns have a lot of new flavors!”

As she said this, Alice showed him another smile. After Kagami was satisfied by her expression, he began to walk with Alice, trying to stay clear of the main street. After a while, something he got used to seeing often as he passed through Balman appeared in Kagami’s view.

Despite it being daytime, there was a bizarre sign illuminated with neon lights. It was common for banks, the Quest Guild and other facilities that operate across the country to use such signs. This one in particular was a special recreational facility that only the really rich could use. It was a Game Center, which had always existed since ancient times.

“Now that I think about it...this town has one too.”

Alice also noticed the strange building when she looked at Kagami, who had suddenly stopped moving.

“What...is that, Kagami-san?”

“A Game Center.”

After Kagami muttered that, he revealed a grin and suggested “Let’s go stop by for a bit.” Alice definitely wouldn’t refuse the invitation, and trotted along, holding ice-cream in one of her hands as she followed Kagami into the Game Center.

At that moment, Alice’s eyes widened and glittered once again. When they entered the center, loud sounds from the game machines filled their ears, and the colorful lights combined with the variety of game machines naturally drew their attention.

“Every one of them has a different type of game, and although the cost of 100 Silver for one session is expensive, it’s reasonable for the time that would be spent if you’re here....Well, it’s just a recreational facility.”

“One session is 100 Silver!? Isn’t that expensive?”

Kagami informed Alice, who was standing in at the entrance of the Game Center in a daze, and she replied with a surprised expression.

“Well, since the energy consumed by the game machines is rather high, the price was probably set up to compensate for that. The guys who play are quite wealthy, no?”

After he said that, Alice checked their surroundings and realized that the people playing the games in front of those practical machines were all rather good-looking. Although there were also those who weren’t good-looking, they were only loitering around watching from behind the people who were playing instead of playing themselves. After seeing such people in a daze, Kagami said from the side, “After all, it’s free for those who only want to enter,” and she assented with an “I see.”

“Want to give one a try?”

“I-It’s fine! I would just be borrowing money, even though it’s 100 Silver, and you also took care of various things, like our meals. I can’t cause you any more trouble than this.”

When she said this, Kagami recalled the debt he’d forgotten about, since their goal had changed from an escort mission to visiting the Demon King’s Castle. Although he wasn’t really worried about it, he gave her a smile and said, “Is that so? Well, since I’ll

let you pay it off, let's do it another time," believing he'd be barking up the wrong tree if she were to borrow more against her will.

However, it seemed like she at least had an interest in the games, and since she wanted to see, he decided to watch from behind as other people played.

The game units consisted of video games that were displayed on a monitor, those that let you feel movements as you rode them and moved around, and games where you pressed buttons to match a rhythm. Alice held an interest for all of them and smiled happily like someone who was waiting to play.

"Kagami-san, what type of games do you like?"

"I like fighting games, since if you win, you can always play another round without having to pay."

While Kagami said that, he moved in front of one of the game machines he usually played. Compared to the other games, there were a lot more people watching, and they were cheering enthusiastically. Those who were playing were also so engrossed that their expressions changed frequently, and they shouted if they were victorious, while they hung their heads and hit the machines if they lost.

Although Alice expressed her interest of the spectacle with an "Ooh!," she noticed a video game machine located separately in the corner of the Game Center and gazed at it. Nobody was surrounding it, and whether or not the location was bad, nobody looked at it.

"Hey Kagami-san, why is that one placed in the corner like that?"

"That one is different from the others, and it charges by time. Ten minutes is 100 Silver. You need to train to get stronger so that you can defeat enemies, and you end up spending a ridiculous amount of time to clear it.

"What's the game like?"

Although she asked out of mere curiosity, Kagami's expression stiffened and he hesitated to answer as though it would be difficult.

"...It's an RPG. A role-playing game."

He muttered it as if he found it unpleasant to say it.

“Role-playing...game?”

“It’s simple, it’s a game where you form a party just like you do in this world. You clear the game by raising characters with roles that you like, defeat monsters to get stronger, and defeat the Demon King.”

“That’s...interesting? It doesn’t seem like we should bother trying that Game.”

“Well at least the characters have a Status like we do, and as for its value, it might be fun since both you and the enemies are born with advantages and disadvantages. You also need to use your head to think about favorable conditions, otherwise you will lose.”

The expression Kagami wore while he spoke suggested that he didn’t enjoy it at all, and even though he burst out laughing as he added “Though it’s disagreeable to not have a Villager as a Role,” Alice had a feeling that she knew what he didn’t like about it since a part of him was different and tried to ask about it.

However, at that moment a large amount of loud cheering and the sound of music booming from outside could be heard clearly by those inside the Game Center.

“Oh, it looks like the parade has started. Shall we go?”

“Y-Yeah.”

Replying to Kagami, who held out his hand, she held back the words she had tried to say, deciding that it wasn’t anything important, and departed from the Game Center.

Part 12

A resounding cheer that was much louder than the one inside the Game Center reached their ears when they stepped outside. The people who were walking in the streets ran off towards the main street, and the people who were holding goods bought from the stalls watched excitedly, smiling as if their hearts were floating with happiness.

“Papa! Hurry, hurry!”

Groups of parents and children, couples, and other such people had all headed off towards the main street. Seeing this, Alice, who didn't know about activities like parades, restlessly stared at Kagami and lightly tugged at the hem of his clothes. She had strong feelings against being pushy and troubling him.

Kagami, who understood this from seeing her, burst out laughing as he said “It's alright to act like a brat,” and then headed towards the main street while holding Alice's hand.

“Am...azingggg!”

As they had expected, there were plenty of festivities taking place as they arrived at the main street. People in the main street Square formed a long line around a giant, slow moving object that was carrying various people. The townspeople who walked along the road threw their hands up as they enthusiastically cheered for the warriors that were mixed into the parade. While walking down the main street, children performed a dance, as if to guide the object used to transport the warriors in the parade. Their performance filled the hearts of those watching in the vicinity with great vigor.

Even though all they did was stand, their spirits were uplifted by the completely noisy atmosphere, as if an order had descended from the heavens. Influenced by the atmosphere and buried in the crowd of people, Alice pranced around with a ‘pyon, pyon’, like a rabbit, and yelled.

“Amazing! It's amazing Kagami-san!”

“Although you're bouncing around with a ‘pyon pyon’, can you even see it?”

“I can’t see it at all! But, somehow, that big thing they’re riding is moving, it’s, um... amazing!”

As she said that, Alice continued to gaze at the large object that was carrying people while feeling something that couldn’t be put into words. Even so, Kagami, who didn’t want to get irritated by her constant ‘pyon pyon’ bouncing in order to see everything, lifted her up onto his shoulders with a grunt.

Although Alice blushed in embarrassment at being picked up, she immediately and obediently spoke her gratitude, “Thank you, Kagami-san!”

“Still, just how many Adventurers are going to try and fight.”

“But...it’s not as many as I had thought. I had thought there would be several thousands.”

“The guys who were invited to the Parade are just a small portion of them, right? Whether or not the others are spectating, aren’t the truly powerful guys gathering their spirits in a quiet place right now?”

When Kagami said this, the parade line suddenly halted, the performers switched to rhythmical music, and the children who had been dancing to the previous rhythm began another dance. Beside them, carried in the hands of the Adventurers, a big reinforced wooden box was mixed in with the parade.

After the box was placed in the center of the wide space between the performers and the large object, everyone except for two Adventurers immediately scattered to the left and right.

“What’s about to begin?”

Not replying to Alice’s question, Kagami, who could generally predict the outcome, only looked at the movements of the two adventurers, who reeked of idiocy.

Immediately after, one of the two Adventurers who was left near the wooden box broke the seal and slid the key inside the box’s lock. A four-legged Monster with a green shell and skin that emitted a pale light similar to iron armor appeared from inside. The yellow light of its eyes penetrated the darkness of the box and a strange roar filled the air, as if it wished to make others cover their ears as it came out.

What came out was a Monster, a Grapple Blogger around Level 24 that was worthless even to the active Adventurers in the area, since its size couldn't even compare to that of a domesticated pig.

The other Adventurer, who had been on stand-by, drew out a sword from the sheath on his waist and took a stance against the Monster. Immediately afterwards, the Monster charged at the sword wielding Adventurer.

Rather than avoiding the charge, the Adventurer used his sword to parry from the front and shook off the Monster, knocking it away. After that, he swung his sword downward without flinching and stabbed the Monster, transforming it into gold.

After reaching the climax, the observers standing at the side of the road were in a craze, shouting cheers of joy. There were even those who shouted "Nice, Nice!" and "The Demon King's Army is such a worthless opponent!" and the like.

Then, after the Adventurer that had opened the wooden box collected the gold, the child dancers and performers that had scattered gathered together again, and the parade began to advance.

"W-what was that just now Kagami-san? Everyone was making a racket, yet it looks like the parade has done it in multiples spots..."

"That was a demonstration that relieves the audience by asserting power, but it indirectly says that we will win against the Demon King's Army. Although it isn't something bad, it leaves a bad taste."

A trembling Alice replied with an "I-is that so," to Kagami. Although it wasn't Demons who were being killed, she couldn't help but be perplexed by such a scene. It was as if they were indirectly baring their teeth against Demons in hostility. Kagami sighed.

Immediately after, the parade stopped advancing once again, and just like before, the child dancers and the performers scattered.

After a while, a sound sliced through the air around them, , then with a 'Zudo!', a dull sound rang out as the concrete ground was destroyed. A Monster with a giant body, several times larger than the Grapple Blogger from earlier, leapt out from the concrete fragments and then fell back down from the sky.

Although it walked on four legs just like the Grapple Blogger did, it was extremely scary to look at. Its overwhelming power was evident by the size of its fully-grown mane, which resembled the mane of more than half of the Beasts in the main street, its tough jaw that could easily pulverize a lump of iron, the giant fangs protruding from its jaw, and its jet black body which was reflecting light.

Since its appearance was too sudden, there were those who fled, screaming out in alarm, after seeing its large body.

“It’s fine, it’s fine! Beat its ass, Adventurer-samas!”

“Haah~...So far the monsters have all been killed. The Adventurers right now are amazing to be able to defeat such a scary Monster. But, is it normal for it to come falling from the sky?”

“Well, it’s not a problem, even if this was an attack from the Demon King’s Army. At best, this is just a normal confrontation to them.”

This, too, was just one of the events to them, and because there were those who thought that the Adventurers would handle it somehow, even if someone thought it was dangerous, they wouldn’t try to run away. Instead, just like earlier, they cheered enthusiastically for the Adventurers that were lining up in the middle.

“Hey, hey...Ain’t this bad?”

Amongst the crowd, only Kagami had understood the danger and abnormality of the situation. The dancers and performers, rather than scattering to the sides, went down the middle of the road and ran away as far as their legs could carry them. The Adventurers who had formed a line wore a looks of surprise as they wielded their weapons; just as one of the commonfolk had said earlier, this situation was outside of their expectations and they understood that the possibility of it being a Demon attack was high.

Even if it was an attack, Kagami could instantly conclude that it would be useless to try and defeat it while trying to protect the cheering audience. This was because Kagami knew about the jet-black Beast that fell down.

It was one of the Spawn Blockers that existed deep inside the Demon King's Castle. They were Monsters that could only be spawned from the Spawn Block placed by the Demon King in that one specific area within the castle and would only be used under special circumstances.

It was the Berserker Beast. With its prided Level of 213, it was a genuine Monster.

"Hey, run away you guys!"

Kagami yelled out too late. The Berserker Beast moved instantly, with a speed unimaginable for its size, towards the line of Adventurers wielding their weapons, and blew away the adventurers standing beside the Object with a slash from its giant forelegs.

When the Object and the Adventurers who were blown away crashed into the wall of a house, the adventurers spat out blood, lost consciousness, and dropped their weapons onto the ground.

In an instant, several Adventurers had been knocked unconscious. The other Adventurers that had been holding themselves back ran away as fast as they could.

""""""UWAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAH!""""""

It wasn't just the Adventurers that fled. The part of the audience that was still there also fled. The crowd fell into a state of pandemonium with people rushing out of the main street one by one. They pushed their way out without caring for others, crashed into others without apologizing and prioritized themselves while running away.

Except for Kagami, who had anticipated the confusion created by the Monster invading in the middle of the town, the people ran in different directions. Kagami stood in place like a large tree, dividing the flow of people and shouting, "Pull yourself together!" as he tried to calm down the flow of escaping people.

"H-...Hii!! Don't come over here!"

While people desperately tried to escape, the Adventurers who had put on a show of defeating the Grapple Bloggers were paralyzed with fear and impulsively swung their swords at the Berserker Beast that stood before them.

Kagami, who had finally managed to somewhat calm the flow of people, hurriedly took Alice off of his shoulders and placed her on the ground.

However, the Adventurers who quicker to react grazed the base of the Berserker Beast's nose with their wildly swinging swords, and, at that moment, the Berserker Beast let out a howl before moving to slash at one of the Adventurers.

"Divine Shield!"

The forelegs that had slashed out towards the Adventurers who had avoided being slammed into the wall earlier stopped abruptly after colliding with an Adventurer who was emitting a pale light. A metallic clang reverberated through the surroundings.

"Haah...Ku, a-are you alright?"

"You are?"

"This isn't the time for self-introductions. Hurry up and flee!"

It wasn't an Adventurer who had stopped that slash, but Krul, a woman wrapped in a white robe that exposed her azure-colored hair. She roared that out towards the Adventurer with a pained look as a 【Divine Shield】, which formed a Magic Shield from light, expanded around her.

In exchange for consuming a large amount of magic power, 【Divine Shield】 was an omnipotent shield with enough endurance to protect against anything, regardless of the attack. This endurance, depending on the timing and attack, was reduced over time.

"K...k-k-kyaaa!"

Sure enough, the 【Divine Shield】 broke after stopping the slash, and the Adventurer and Krul were blown back by the attack. However, Krul's stance wasn't ruined and she held her Staff with both hands as she prepared to promptly attack the Berserker Beast before her.

"Y-...You won't run away? It's fine to abandon someone like me and run away yourself!"

The Adventurer, whose stance had been destroyed by the attack, yelled when he saw her brave appearance.

“I won’t run away! Of course...It’s frightening enough to make me want to run away...but! It’s my duty as royalty to defend the people! I will never abandon my people!”

The Berserker Beast didn’t wait for Krul as she yelled that out and charged at her, widening its mouth as it tried to crush her with its tough jaw. Its mouth was covered with saliva, its sharp eyes seized Krul with a glare, and a tremor resounded as it continued to advance step by step.

“Divine Shield!”

Krul, whose legs trembled as she faced the approaching Berserker Beast, once again cast a Magic Shield in front of her. However, the moment the Berserker Beast stood in front of her very eyes, she collapsed onto the ground with a ‘petan’. At that moment,

“Yoo, nice of you to hold out! Thanks to you, I stored enough power to defeat this guy in one...blow!”

The Berserker Beast suddenly stopped in front of Krul without touching the Divine Shield and someone who could only be seen as a commoner in Villager garments spoke, in an unworried voice, before suddenly appearing in front of Krul with a gust of wind.

The Villager stopped the Berserker Beast’s movement by firmly grasping its fang in his left hand, and whether or not he had stored power like he’d said, an orange-colored aura coiled around his right arm as he launched it upwards, hitting the Beast’s strong jaw.

The shockwave that generated around him split the Berserker Beast’s skin with a roar, and its whole body was blasted into the air at a blistering speed before changing into gold along the way.

“You...aren’t angry today, right?”

Although Krul was, for a moment, too dumbfounded by the spectacle, she soon recognized the person who had saved her and put on a smile, tears forming in her eyes as she muttered to Kagami.

“...Though I really could have come to save you a lot earlier, these guys were so annoying as they were running away. You helped me by luring it out. Sorry about that, this time you got a perfect score.”

Kagami held out his hand to Krul as he said that.

When Krul saw Kagami hold out his hand while he unreservedly declaring that she was a decoy with a smile, his confidence, and the fact that he was certain to rescue her with his true abilities, made her smile back and she grabbed his hand, realizing that she had been used as a decoy in his place.

Part 13

“Krul-san! Are you ok!?”

After a while, a desperately worried Tina rushed forward. Despite Krul’s lack of injuries, Tina began to barrage Krul with Healing Magic as she approached, and Krul’s body was wrapped within a green light.

“Geez...Don’t be so rash. I thought my lifespan was being cut short when Krul-san faced that Monster!”

“Now that I think about it, with the exception of princess-sama, what did you guys do?”

“Eh? Wawawa...H-He appearedddd!”

Although Tina had become rigid for a moment while shielding Krul’s body behind her, after realizing that the man before her, who had spoken in a cool manner and saved Krul by defeating the monster, was Kagami, she just muttered, “Thank you very much for saving her!” as Krul casually emerged from the light.

“We were swallowed by the wave of people when they all started to run away. Only Kuu-chan was unaffected, since she immediately went to try and save them.”

Soon, Palna and Rex’s worn out figures appeared, walking towards them slowly as Palna muttered “Yareyare” in relief.

Having heard her, Kagami sympathised with an “I see,” and thought back to a similar situation.

“That Monster that flew into the sky earlier, although it looked like it vanished, was it because of you?”

As always, Rex asked Kagami with his frank hostility. Kagami nodded in response while looking like he wanted to talk about something.

“No matter how you look at it, surely that wasn’t an opponent that could be defeated in one attack. What kind of skill did you use to defeat it?”

“Hmm? I just used a simple Charge Blow, a Charge Blow. It’s a fundamental skill that even Villagers can use. You can use it too, right?”

“You’re just lying with a straight face. You’re unarmed, right? There’s no way you could’ve defeated it barehanded.”

“Well...even if I say it like that, except for Charge Blow, I only have one other Attack Skill, and if I use that skill, it would render my body useless. So, I have no other means besides Charge Blow.”

After Kagami said that, Rex moved his line of sight to Krul with a dumfounded expression. Then Krul said, “An orange-colored Aura appeared on his right arm,” and she told him the honest truth about the time Kagami used the Charge Blow.

Although the truth was surprising, Rex felt an indescribable discomfort.

He couldn’t believe that a Villager’s power was enough to defeat the Monster from earlier with only a charge attack, even if it was the Level 999 Kagami. Even if he didn’t know the accurate numerical value of the Monster’s skills necessary to analyze its level, surely the Monster from earlier was beyond Level 150. Even if he used a Charge Blow, the opponent didn’t appear weak enough to be defeated in one attack.

He couldn’t understand the man standing in front of them. How had he become that strong?

What had he discovered after reaching that Level? What kinds of Skills did he have? Why...did he try to get stronger?

“I have...a lot of things I want to speak with you about.”

Rex looked at him with a complicated expression.

For once, Rex didn’t show hostility. Kagami looked at him in amazement, and with a “Hou,” he revealed an impressed smile.

Krul seemed like she had prepared herself. Behind her, like always, Tina appeared anxious. Palna didn’t look at them, feeling as if it couldn’t be helped, and the other three adventurers waited for Kagami to reply.

“Of course, but first, we should do something about this situation.”

After Kagami replied, he faced Alice who was pacing worriedly beside him as if she wanted to say something, and showed her a smile and saying, “See?”

As if baffled by Kagami’s sudden acknowledgement, Alice immediately nodded, smiling happily without saying anything.

“It doesn’t mean that you’re just an ally of Demons.”

Palna finally looked at him, she muttered that as she heard his declaration.

“Although I don’t know what there is to misunderstand, even if I’m not an ally of Demons, I’m not their enemy. Having said that, even if I’m not an ally of Humans, I’m not their enemy either. I’m neutral.”

“I don’t understand what you mean.”

Palna muttered while she looked the other way with a cold look, as if she had predicted that he would say those words. Kagami saw her and retorted with, “I’ll make you understand,” within his heart. Then he turned around towards Alice who had pulled the hem of his clothes earlier and asked, “What’s wrong?”

“When Kagami-san was fighting earlier, I heard screams in the other direction. I heard what sounded like a Monster’s cry. I think there are probably Monsters rampaging here and there.”

“Shall we hurry? Though I don’t think that the ones falling down with a bang would be Berserker Beasts, we should check to make sure. Well, I think the Adventurers of this town could handle it somehow...Hmm?”

They heard cries from far away, and just as Kagami turned in that direction, a man that appeared to be a heavily equipped gatekeeper came running in a hurry from one of the main street’s side roads.

The gatekeeper ran towards Kagami’s group as fast as he could after spotting them. He arrived in front of them looking pale, panting with a “zeehaa,” and squatted, his shoulders moving up and down.

“You guys are still in a place like this?...Flee...quickly! It’s already the end for this city!”

He cried that out desperately while breathing haggardly.

Naturally, Kagami wasn’t the only one disturbed by these words. Even Rex and Krul looked shaken.

“Hey, hey, even if you say Monsters are falling down onto the city, it’s not like they can’t be defeated, right? There are lots of Adventurers in this city after all.”

“The Monsters who invaded are already fighting with the other Adventurers! Although normally the Monsters should have been defeated by now...it’s not like that!”

Kagami’s expression stiffened as the sudden development was completely outside of his expectations. Feeling the unease in Kagami’s change of demeanor, Alice’s mood also became clouded.

The shoulders that had been moving up and down until now trembled as if remembering something bitter, and the gatekeeper spoke, opening his bloodshot eyes, slowly urging them on,

“The large crowd of Monsters inhabiting Atros Island...are heading towards Salumeria from the Demon King’s Castle! The number...is approximately 10,000...!”

Except for Kagami, everyone had their eyes wide open as if they couldn’t believe the gatekeeper’s words at all.

To make up for the many high Level Monsters in Atros Island, there weren’t many Spawn Blocks. Even if the Monsters from Atros Island were wiped out, it was standard for Adventurers to fight in parties to increase survivability.

There was no reason not to feel despair in the face of 10,000 such opponents rushing towards Salumeria.

Even with the several thousand Adventurers currently in the city, there appeared to be no chance of winning should they face the hoard of 10,000 Monsters.

“A notice of Salumeria’s end.”

Meanwhile, as if troubled with a lack of interest, Kagami muttered this.

Part 14

“Are you certain about this information!?”

A panicking Rex asked as he grabbed the gatekeeper’s shoulders.

“Aah...Without a doubt, I saw it with my own eyes! I was the lookout on top of the outer wall on the west side. Just as I thought that it was just those persistent Demon King Army fellows again, it turned out to be something else entirely...The Monsters that dropped from the sky were just a feint. We were hit through the front!”

The gatekeeper who had been complaining in desperation unintentionally pointed a sour look to Rex, as if he had been accused of lying, and Rex released his hands from the gatekeeper’s shoulders.

Sweat dripped from Rex’s forehead as he considered their options, while Krul and Tina stared at him, waiting for an answer.

“And? What should we do, Rex?”

Palna imposingly asked Rex, not giving him any more time to think, as if he should know what to do in such while he was overwhelmed by the situation.

“Courage and recklessness are different...We should withdraw from here. Although Salumeria is being attacked by the Demon King Army...it’s fine if we counterattack after we re-organize and gather more people. We shouldn’t die in vain here.”

“That’s reasonable...We’ll guide the people who are still in the city as far as we can until the Monster troops arrive.”

Whether or not Krul and Tina also believed this to be the best strategy, they wore serious expressions and nodded their heads in assent.

Seeing this, the gatekeeper was at a loss for words and thanked them with a “Sorry about this...you’ve saved me.”

“Kagami-san, please lend us your strength as well. Cooperate with us and help rescue the people of this city.”

During this exchange, Kagami had been staring at them idly, until Krul suddenly took his hand and pleaded for his help.

Kagami assented with a, “Yeah,” while strongly gripping Krul’s hand, and then immediately let go. Then he said, “Though, I have something I need to do before that,” before heading in the direction the gatekeeper had come from.

“Where are you planning on going?”

Rex stopped Kagami, who had tried to casually head off somewhere, and asked him.

“I went ahead and called Takako-chan earlier. Takako-chan has war potential.”

“Takako?”

“Is that the muscular monk man?”

“Hmm? Takako-chan is a woman, you know?”

Although it wasn’t as startling as the fact that there was a group of 10,000 Monsters currently rushing towards them, the hero’s party, familiar with Takako’s figure, distorted their expressions, unable to conceal their shock.

Rex recalled her appearance and wondered how it was possible for her to be a girl despite her severe lack of feminine elements. Putting his feelings aside, he considered that maybe every part of her body had been completely changed into muscle.

“Since I need to meet up with her, I’ll start guiding the city’s residence before you guys. I leave Alice to you.”

“Hey...you, do you realize what you’re saying? I believe that we should kill Demons, you know? Did you already forget our dispute from the other day?”

“Don’t you guys have things you want to ask me? Surely there isn’t any merit to killing Alice until we’re done talking.”

Certainly, there wasn't any merit in killing Alice at this point. However, the ones attacking the town were Demons and Alice was a Demon as well. Under normal circumstances, it would be natural to kill a Demon like her if any were present.

Despite this, Rex became bewildered and wore an unpleasant look. Even without Kagami asking to protect her, he himself wouldn't kill someone who had already declared themselves as a friend.

"Since what I want to ask doesn't matter, what if I said I would like to immediately kill this child?"

Palna spoke such menacing words with a smile in response to Kagami's inexplicable attempt to leave.

"I ask of you not to kill her and to protect her, please."

Palna was bewildered by his unexpected reaction. He didn't behave arrogantly and give them an order, nor did he preach to them with foul words. Instead, he had merely asked them for a favor with a troubled smile.

While they were dumbstruck by his unexpected words, Kagami rushed away without waiting for a reply, and, just like that, he was gone.

Although she had temporarily stiffened due to his crazy actions, Palna soon returned to her normal self, and sighed as she muttered "Aah, geez!"

"Such an irresponsible man. You were abandoned by him."

Although she muttered this to Alice as if pitying her, Alice just stared at Kagami's fading figure with honest eyes.

"I don't think that's the case. Since Kagami-san thought that this was for the best, I'll believe in his decision."

"Even though you're a Demon, what the hell are you saying? What would you do if I were to kill you?"

“Although that’s a possibility...I think Kagami-san believes that you guys aren’t like that. Therefore, he asked for a genuine favor, without setting strange terms. That’s why I believe in you guys, who believed in Kagami-san.”

Alice’s hands were trembling as she said that. Palna could see as clear as day that Alice was bluffing and began to head towards the center of the city.

“Y-You aren’t scared?”

Tina asked, worried that her little companion was bluffing.

“Although it is scary...I trust him. It’s useless to not believe in him, since I have my own hopes.”

Alice did not change her posture as she said that, staring at a Kagami who was no longer visible with a serious expression. However, her body was trembling and tears had gathered in her eyes.

They did not know why Kagami had left in such an odd manner, so although they tried to trust his judgement, the ones left behind couldn’t help but feel anxious.

Alice’s goal was for Humans and Demons to reconcile and coexist. Yet, 10,000 Monsters were rushing forth as if to destroy that hope. This conflict could only become a spark that would worsen the relationship between them. For example, even if she stopped this recklessness by going to her father, the residents of Salumeria would probably still hate the Demons for attacking their home.

Even if Kagami were to fight as a part of the Third Army like he had said he would, she couldn’t see an end to the conflict.

“It’s fine. Please be at ease.”

At this time, Alice, whose eyes were brimming with tears, was hugged by Krul.

“The promise won’t be broken. I, too, think that I want to try and believe in Kagami-san. You’re innocent, right?”

When Krul attempted to comfort her, Alice, who had been wrapped in unease, was at a loss for words and realized that she had incorrectly guessed the Hero party’s actions.

At the very least, her hands had stopped trembling, and she became curious as to why Krul was trying to understand her.

“...Let’s go.”

Rex muttered that in a worried manner, feeling strange after witnessing that scene, and Palna chased after him.

“Before that...Please let me know one thing. What kind of person is Kagami-san when he’s with you?”

“Well...he treats me without any discrimination...No, well, um...he’s a gentle person.”

With a satisfied expression, Tina replied, “I see,” and chased after Rex and Palna saying, “Let’s go,” as if she understood what Alice had tried to say.

As soon as the three caught up to Rex and Palna, they began to run around searching for those who were left behind when fleeing from the city.

Although there were many Monsters that the Adventurers had failed to defeat that came to attack them along the way, they weren’t as powerful as the Berserker Beast Kagami had defeated. With the four’s power, the Monsters were swept away.

There was pandamonium, like a scene straight out of Hell, and many of those who had given up on escaping chose to flee towards the eastern side to take refuge. The Hero’s group moved into the heart of the buildings on the west side, yelling out loudly to check for anyone that had yet to flee.

“I wonder if the Monsters were defeated by the other Adventurers for us? There aren’t that many left.”

“S-Since a group of 10,000 Monsters are coming, we have to warn the people that are still taking refuge without knowing about it.”

Palna was walking while staying vigilant of her surroundings, and Tina yelled out loudly, “A large group of Monsters is heading this way! Run away everyone!” Rex, Krul, and Alice, who were behind them, carefully checked for any stragglers.

“Now that I think about it, why aren’t you emanating any magic power even though you’re a Demon?”

Along the way, Rex realized that there wasn’t any magic power emanating from Alice’s horn. While Rex asked that, Krul poked at the pointy part of Alice’s head that looked liked a horn, which was wrapped in white cloth and a stylish ribbon.

“It’s thanks to this cloth. It was given to me by Kagami-san...It’s an item that is made from a Spawn Blocker, so it’s able to completely suppress the magic power Demons emanate.”

“Eeh! Well if that was made for all the Demons, wouldn’t the breakout of Monsters stop?”

Tina yelled out from behind Alice as she casually listened in to her unexpected explanation.

Surprised as well, Rex and Krul stared hard at the white cloth covering Alice’s horn as if they were seeing something unbelievable.

“It’s too difficult to make, and it has to be from Spawn Blockers or else it won’t work. Kagami-san did say that it was really valuable after all.”

Alice answered honestly while feeling some slight regret that she could only report what she knew even though they showed great interest. Deep down in her heart, Palna muttered, “It’s natural...” in wonder.

“...Tch! Careful!”

When she heard that, Alice’s eyes opened wide as she looked at the source of the voice, and Palna jumped to the left, guessing that she was being targeted from Alice’s gaze. Immediately after, a pale sphere of light shot out and on impact, engulfed the place Palna had been standing, in flames.

“Get away from Alice-sama!”

The moment they heard that, the Hero’s party grabbed their weapons and readied their stance. When they looked for the threat, they saw a muscular man in a pink dougi and a silver haired man wearing a surcoat and hat.

“Takako-san! Menou!”

Before anyone else could react, Alice ran up to the two of them. Takako and Menou welcomed Alice, who had been released too easily, with a bewildered “Are?”

“Alice-sama! I’m glad you’re not hurt...Tch! Although you were released quickly...What’s the meaning of this?”

“Well...It’s quite a long explanation...”

Takako who somehow guessed what was going on without her explanation, gazed at the Hero’s party who were brandishing their weapons, and let out a sigh as she muttered, “This party that we’ve formed really is out of the ordinary.”

Rex, Tina and Krul gulped when the muscular presence wearing a pink-colored dougi in front of them sighed and placed her right hand on her cheek. “This is...a wo...man?”

“I wonder if it’s fine that his magic power isn’t being concealed? Though it does look like his horn is being hidden.”

Palna, who didn’t care whether Takako was a man or woman, began to ask as she directed her hateful gaze to Menou.

“In this confusion, there probably aren’t many people paying attention to who’s emanating magic power and who’s not. There aren’t any Spawn Blockers around here either. Rather than that, why are you bastards acting in concert with Alice-sama!”

Menou yelled while letting out killing intent, and stepped forward, trying to protect Alice. He was vigilant thanks to yesterday’s events.

“We were asked to by Kagami-san. He said that Takako-san would lend us her power and should be able to solve the situation...Did you not meet up with Kagami-san? He said he would search for Takako-san.”

Trying not to irritate Menou, Krul undid her stance and replied to his question.

Takako and Menou looked at each other’s faces once as these words were spoken, and shook their heads back and forth in denial, looking troubled.

“We came directly from the inn...Where would we have passed by him in this heavily populated town? Anyways, we haven’t seen him.”

“Somebody! Somebody, come here!”

Krul simply muttered, “I see...”, but her reply didn’t mirror her feelings. She was worried about Kagami, who had strayed from the correct path. Takako and Menou, who didn’t know the full story, tilted their heads, not knowing why Krul was so worried.

At this time, they heard a hurried cry for help from the road to the west side of town. Everybody there directed their gaze to the gatekeeper who came running from that direction.

“Somebody...Anyone is fine...the west, somebody come to the west gate!”

The running gatekeeper came to a stop in front of Rex, and spoke in a hoarse voice as his shoulders heaved up and down.

This was a different gatekeeper from the one earlier that was fleeing from the Monsters in the west side, and at his words, Rex and Tina became bewildered.

Meanwhile, Krul healed his vitality using Healing Magic, and promptly tried to talk to him and calm the distressed man. And then,

“There is an idiot standing against the horde of 10,000 Monsters by himself! I tried to stop him! Even though I tried, he wouldn’t listen! Even though he looked like a weak Villager...He’s fighting with those Monsters alone right now! Somebody...Anyone is fine! Don’t let him be abandoned! It’s fine if you just run away after taking him...Somebody go save him!”

He yelled out, and even though he had witnessed it himself, the gatekeeper was bewildered and couldn’t calm down. He couldn’t believe that the Villager would win such a reckless battle.

Immediately afterwards, Alice began to run as fast as she could towards the west gate. She began to cry in anxiety, regretting the fact that she had let Kagami leave, and thought about what would happen from here on out.

Part 15

She had doubted his reasons for entrusting her to the Hero's party and leaving to find Takako. At first, she had thought that she would only be a burden while looking for Takako. With the urgency of the situation, it was natural to try and move quickly and efficiently, so she had thought that was the reason he'd entrusted her to the Hero's party.

She had also believed that he'd given up on their mission, that it couldn't be helped with the current situation. He had just been trying to do the best he could. She had selfishly believed that Kagami had thought like that.

However, she had been wrong.

Kagami hadn't given up. If the people were deprived of their home, it would be nearly impossible to mend the wound. However, if the attack was repelled, then there would still be room for peace. They would not become filled with irremediable hatred from having lost everything. While they wouldn't forget that they were attacked, the humans would settle that hatred themselves due to the glory called victory. After all, they would still have something to lose if they chose to pursue hatred instead.

Kagami still hadn't given up on the peace between Demons and Humans. Entrusting her to the Hero's party was the right choice. The reason why Kagami had politely asked the reluctant Hero's party for a favor was so that he could give it his all.

"Kagami-san is...kind-hearted, he really is...!"

Kagami was supporting her dream with all of his might. Yet, she'd felt anxious and had half given-up. She became embarrassed and felt both sorry and regretful. Alice recklessly ran towards the west gate as if compelled by an indescribable feeling.

"It'll take you a long time to get there with such a short stride."

Takako had caught up with Alice, and picked her up, carrying her at a blistering speed. She didn't miss a step while picking up Alice.

"Takako-san...Kagami-san is!"

“I know, I know. Let’s hurry...Even if he has an automatic healing skill and is Level 999, handling attacks from 10,000 opponents would be too demanding and difficult.”

The vigorous Takako continued to charge forward like a raging bull as she spoke. Then as she felt a presence closing in on them from behind, Takako turned her head to look. It was the Hero’s party. They had caught up to Takako’s blistering speed.

“Araa? They actually caught up...Even though I’m running seriously.”

As she said this, Takako lowered her speed slightly and met up with Rex who was trying to catch up to her.

“Hah...Hah...! The one over there is...the Sage, Krul, and her speed spells are temporarily boosting our speed. Rather...casting them makes it hard for her to breathe, with the speed we’re running at. You’re way too abnormal.”

As Rex said this, he looked towards Krul, Tina and Palna. Everyone was reaching the limits of their stamina, and began to gradually lower their speed with a grimace. It appeared that only Rex had a slight margin left to work with. Takako also lowered her speed in order to run alongside them, with the belief that it was better for everyone to be in agreement if they were going to save Kagami.

“Could it be that you guys are coming to save him?”

“It can’t be helped, we have things we want to talk about with that guy. Besides...even though we asked him once, I’m still uneasy, since we were abandoned.”

After Rex answered Takako’s question, he turned away in embarrassment.

Witnessing the exchange with a “hee”, Alice, who had realized from the beginning that he was just protecting his position as a Hero by being hostile to Demons, admired this trait and realized that Humans weren’t truly bad.

“Eh? Where is Menou?”

Alice, still in Takako’s grasp, looked behind them and wondered out loud.

“If it’s that Demon, he headed towards the west gate in a straight line by jumping from rooftop to rooftop earlier. He has fantastic jumping power since he’s a Demon.”

Listening to Rex, Takako snapped her fingers with a 'pachin' and said, "He had that up his sleeves?"

"Rather than that...What's the meaning of that Villager's actions? You've known him for a long time, right? Why is he trying to face a troop of 10,000 Monsters by himself?"

"I don't know, since he didn't tell me, but to have gone by himself, he probably didn't want anyone to be sacrificed...In other words, even he understands that it's unreasonable. Even so, he's facing them alone in order to prevent resentment from being formed, since would lead to Demon towns being attacked by humans. He's a child that fights for both Demons and Humans."

Alice was slightly saddened by Takako's words. If she thought about it, she'd been lying to herself from the beginning, by calling herself a burden she had refused to get involved. Just remembering that, she didn't want to get scolded for her earlier thoughts.

In contrast, Rex sneered. After showing a look of wanting to say something foolish, he stiffened, as if he didn't want to be heard.

"I understand that he's a guy that tries to fight for the coexistence of Humans and Demons, or at least tries to prevent there being any wounds between them. What I want to ask him isn't that! Even though I have my own reasons as well, why is it that he's trying to fight without fear of death! Courage and recklessness are two different things...I can't imagine that he's foolish enough not to understand this!"

Takako looked ahead of them as Rex spoke and became serious as her expression darkened.

"As for that child, from the very start, he isn't a being that defines himself with terms like courage or recklessness. He just thinks in a simple manner, what he can do and what he can't do...giving up or not giving up...Just that."

Seeing that her expression had changed and her tone of voice had lowered as Takako answered his question, Rex tensed while they ran, cold sweat dripping down his forehead.

“Right now, at the very least, Kagami believes he can fight against them. Of course the chance of succeeding is low...but that child will still do it, even if there’s only a 1% chance. This time in particular, he doesn’t want to give up.”

“Impossible...He’s throwing his life away. Even if he has a 1% chance, there’s a 99% that he will die. It’s fine to be reckless, but surely there are better choices.”

“Didn’t I tell you? I said he doesn’t define himself with terms like courage and recklessness, if he has a chance, he will make a choice, and then single-mindedly adhere to that choice, whether it’s to give up or to persevere.”

Neither agreeing nor disagreeing to her answer, Rex continued to run next to Takako, baffled. Takako muttered, “It can’t be helped,” and since Rex’s image of Kagami might change, she suddenly began to speak about the things that may happen.

“Kagami-chan...he lacks just one important thing that all living things have.”

“Important...thing?”

Not just Rex, but Krul, Palna, and Tina, who were running slightly behind them, and even Alice were curious. For Alice, this was a question she had tried to ask before, but had not received an answer to.

Takako then slowly responded, as if pitying him somehow.

“The fear of death. Kagami-chan doesn’t have it at all.”

Towards these words, everyone wore an indescribable look.

Part 16

“What do you mean by that?”

“It’s just as I said.”

Rex couldn’t understand what she meant. Those who attempted to subjugate the Demon King had the resolve to die; they would have the courage to do so because it was a necessary resolve. Not knowing when they would die, and with the high death-risk involved in subjugating the Demon King, the Hero’s party currently did not fear death.

Even if they were told Kagami lacked this, they couldn’t understand it immediately.

“The fear of death, even if that villager doesn’t have it, we’ve had the resolve to die since a long time ago...is it something special?”

Takako released a sigh at Rex’s words and just told him, “You’ll understand when you see it,” after which they wordlessly ran towards the west gate.

After a while, Alice could see a giant wall and a man dressed in a surcoat.

“Menou!”

Alice raised her voice and called out to Menou who, despite having arrived before them, just stood there without moving.

When they arrived, the previously shut west gate had been opened.

Before the open gate, Menou and several gatekeepers stood idly, not speaking at all. They all stared at something outside of the gate, looking baffled.

“Menou-chan, Kagami-chan is?”

Although Takako yelled that out to him, Menou didn’t reply at all.

He stared at a certain point like his eyes had been bound by something, and even though he couldn’t speak, he pointed to an area outside of the gate, as if he wanted to

say something. When they looked at the location he was pointing at, everyone aside from Takako wore the same surprised expression as the gatekeepers and became speechless.

Outside of the west gate, a dry, vast land spread out in front of them. A few flowers were sprouting here and there, but most had died or vanished due to being dried up. Dead, broken trees and rugged rocks were rolling around, and the ground that was illuminated by the setting sun had soil as red as the barren wasteland of Atros.

Just as the gatekeepers had said, a group of Monsters that seemed to number at 10,000 had come to Salumeria. However, their advance had been stopped and they had been slightly scattered.

“K-...Kagami-san?”

Alice couldn't believe what was in front of her eyes...instead of the troop of Monsters that she should have been seeing, Kagami, who had the presence of a Devil, was releasing an overwhelming feeling, as if this troop wasn't anything special at all.

It was the presence of a person who was showing hostility towards all of the Monsters that originally had the goal of attacking Salumeria. The moment this presence had appeared, all of the Monsters had instinctively concluded that “He is dangerous, and he is someone we must defeat here.”

A giant, one-eyed, green skinned Monster that had a form similar to a human's, but boasted several times the height of one, walked up to Kagami. This Monster was a Level 168 Cyclops that was powerful enough to lift several boulders. Kagami firmly grabbed the Cyclops by one of its hands and waved it around like a weapon, blowing away a large amount of Monsters in the surroundings like they were confetti.

There was a human twirling around a Cyclops, which was said to be the best close combat Monster native to Atros Island and one that shouldn't be challenged without a strategy, with one of his hands.

No matter how crazy this event was, those who saw this reality couldn't form words to describe it.

It was something you could only understand if you saw it.

“Hey you!...It’s dangerous!”

The moment Rex yelled out, several monsters that appeared to be Level 126 Reptilians flew out from the troop of Monsters, and they shot a Heat Beam from their mouths directly at Kagami.

However, he avoided it at the very last moment. As a testament to how long he waited to dodge the attack, a scratch appeared on his cheek. Kagami smiled, not taking it to heart as he flung the Cyclops in his hands towards the flying Monsters.

The moment the Cyclops left his grip, Kagami was attacked all at once by the surrounding Monsters...but he had already vanished instantly from the spot.

Immediately after, completely blurred figures of Kagami appeared in front of the Monsters one by one, as if he was creating after images. When he thrust out both of his hands, the confused Monsters were blown into the air, like the confetti from the parade, and turned into gold.

However, the Cyclops was quick to respond, and the moment the gold landed on the ground, it struck down at the upright Kagami with it’s massive, nearly boulder-sized hand.

The assault didn’t end with just that. The flying Monsters shot out Heat Beams towards the giant, boulder-like fist striking at Kagami, engulfing it in countless small explosions that melded together into a giant explosion.

The Cyclop’s fist was unable to endure the Heat Beams and was partially destroyed, while the rest of his body was engulfed in the explosion and curled up like smoke. Within the maelstrom, a calm, keen eyed and worn-out Kagami showed a fearless smile, unphased by the surprise attack, as blood flowed and splattered onto his forehead. Then, he once again ran towards the troop of Monsters.

“Hey...That guy.”

Everyone there could understand what the surprised Palna was trying to say whilst sweat poured down her forehead. He was certainly taking damage. And serious damage at that.

Yet...He faced the troop of Monsters without fear. The spectators couldn’t help but gasp at the madness.

“I told you, didn’t I? That child doesn’t fear death at all. No matter how much damage he receives, that child wouldn’t try to fight safely unless he’s near death. That child only thinks about whether he can do it or not. If he thinks...that he can do it, he won’t stop ‘til he dies, if not...he will immediately give up.”

The Hero’s party heard Takako speak but couldn’t believe their own eyes as they watched Kagami fighting until he wore himself out. Although it was gradual, Kagami’s wounds seemed to disappear as if he’d never sustained them to begin with.

Although the Hero’s party assumed incorrectly that he had taken no damage, Takako supplied “That’s Kagami-chan’s Skill,” and the Hero’s party once again looked at Kagami with amazement.

He received damage without yielding as if facing down death, he confronted the Monsters, and while he confronted them, his wounds would heal. Then he would fight again, receiving more wounds, and then...he laughs. He was like a genuine Devil.

Perhaps the reason Kagami had entrusted Alice to the Hero’s party was so that they would not see this side of him. This was very likely since the current Kagami clearly was not normal. His eyes were filled with killing intent, and he confronted the 10,000 Monsters while emitting a difficult to endure, spine chilling aura.

The moment everyone there saw this, they understood. This was the REAL Kagami. He had such an overwhelming presence that the Hero’s party understood he hadn’t handled them seriously before.

Equivalent to 10,000.

Endlessly relentless, despite accomplishing the impossible, Kagami on his own was more terrifying than the troop of 10,000 Monsters. They couldn’t help but fear him.

Part 17

“How did that guy get this strong?...No, why did he want to get stronger? What kind of reason could he have to obtain this much power!?”

Rex asked Takako in a trembling voice as he looked away from Kagami. Kagami, who was bold enough to single-handedly fight against the Monsters with his bare hands, smiled while he fought and stopped the Monster’s attacks with his body.

“...Who knows? Even now, I don’t know why he became that strong. But, if his original goal was to obtain the power to fight, I can understand it, even if it’s just that.”

Takako replied to Rex cryptically, while watching over Kagami intently.

“The reason he wanted the power to fight, you say?”

Showing interest, Rex asked without facing her.

“A reason that, surely, is not too different from yours...The Hero, Rex Chickyboy.”

Takako muttered Rex’s full name. Including Rex, the six present, Alice, Menou, Palna, Krul, and Tina looked at Takako as if she had swapped places with Kagami.

“You...know of me?”

“I’m a bar owner, you know? I’m well-informed from my profession. Well...Even if that wasn’t the case, I think that you’re famous. A man with a promising future born in a distinguished family of the Arcasia Kingdom with the role of the Hero...Rex Chickyboy. Weren’t you a hopeless heir who had lost his noble house while still so young...because they were met with ill-fortune and were slaughtered on a journey after encountering seldomly seen, high-Level Monsters?”

As if she hit the mark, Rex showed Takako an unpleased look in response to her words.

“After that, aside from the heir going on a journey...I feel like the rest of the events have lead up to this moment?”

“Is that so...I-I didn’t know.”

Krul muttered in a small voice, looking lost for words, perhaps because she was slightly sympathizing with Rex, who was making a distorted expression.

Beside her, Palna spoke, “You...Speaking of Chickyboy...” in a subdued voice, staring intently at Rex rather than focusing on his past.

When she heard this, Krul muttered “Chickyboy...is it?” as though she was following suit, and Tina also muttered “Chickyboy” while looking dumbfounded shortly after.

“Tch! Anyways, there’s no point in talking about me! That guy had his parents killed by Monsters just like me, right? Are you talking about him wanting the power to fight so he can take revenge?”

“That’s right. I think his reason for wanting the power to fight is definitely because of that.”

“If that’s so...then why is that guy protecting Demons? If they were killed by Monsters, shouldn’t he take his revenge by killing the Demons that spawn them?”

“That’s where you’re wrong. Your parents were both killed by Monsters, but while Kagami’s father was killed by a Monster, his mother...a human, was killed by another human.”

Although Rex understood what had been said, he was left speechless. He felt as though the unpleasant feelings that had always been in his chest had finally disappeared. Since he had continually fought with Monsters to get his revenge, he understood what her statement meant.

He didn’t need Takako to explain it to instantly understand. Why did Kagami maintain his neutral position? Why had he been pissed off at Kagami? Why did he continue to doubt Kagami, while Kagami continued to fight with Monsters?

“He will get his revenge on all Monsters, since his precious person was killed by a Monster. Then, will he get revenge on all humans because his mother was killed by a human? Will he root them all out?”

Everyone there easily came up with the answer. There wasn't a need to bear a grudge against all humans just for that reason, even if it was for revenge. Somehow, it wasn't possible to say that, because he was a human as well.

People that formed the same community wouldn't kill each other, since they were companions. Rather, there wasn't a reason to kill each other in the first place. However, in regards to Monsters, there was a reason. They hurt humans, after all.

In other words, to exterminate all Monsters for revenge was just his personal feelings. In this world's system, they were existences that should be killed, and no problems would arise from it. This wasn't revenge, but just obeying the system.

Alice finally understood the meaning of the words that Kagami had spoken before, "Because I'm an idiot." He had said it because it was convenient to kill things as a human.

However, out of all of them, only Palna could not admit the fact that she understood.

"Was it because...I just went too far with it?"

Rex muttered as he lowered his head. However, Krul tried to support him by slapping his back with a 'Pon' when she saw his appearance.

"Kagami-san has said it. Demons are harmful and are the enemy of humans. However, I think I have an idea as to why Kagami positions himself as neutral. I think there's a reason why he has never gone too far while he fought with Monsters and Demons. Otherwise, he wouldn't care about his own safety...I think this is one of the answers."

Krul took five steps forward with resolution as she said that. Then she stood still and looked back at Takako's group with a small smile.

"Although most of us already understand it, I want to ask him why he thought about going against the ways of this world. I want to hear his answer directly from his mouth after this. It will be problematic if that person dies in this situation."

After she finished saying this, Krul began to run towards Kagami and the troop of 10,000 Monsters with a serious face, looking determined once again.

"I, too...have things I still want to ask him. Like how he managed to get that strong!"

When Rex saw Krul suddenly start running, he let out a sigh and smiled before following behind her.

“Please wait for a moment, Krul-san, Chick...Rex-san! You’ll die immediately since you can’t heal!”

“Isn’t it fine...she wants to hear it directly from his mouth when this is over. His reason for trying to go against the ways of this world!”

Tina began to run to try and catch up with the two who had run off, and Palna soon began to follow as she glared at Kagami, as if she was sizing him up.

“Ah...It’s the springtime of youth! It’s been a long time since my blood began to boil after seeing such a development! Let’s go! Gotta make it a dynamic entry, you know? Uroooooooooah!”

Although the Hero’s party had been seen as an enemy until very recently, Takako yelled in excitement after seeing the people running with hopes for Kagami. Her muscles swelled up as blood coursed through them and she began to run vigorously, quickly overtaking the Hero’s party.

“Takako-dono!? I, too, will assist you!”

Menou believed that there was value in following Takako and fighting to protect Kagami, even if he was to be called a traitor, and began to run without hesitation.

“E-Everyone...!”

When the warriors saw them go, their desire for a fight was lit up and they thought about what they were capable of doing. Alice also began to run towards the eastern side of Salumeria, retracing her footsteps.

CHAPTER 4

ANSWERING SUCH A THING DEPENDS ON YOURSELF AFTER ALL

Part 1

He couldn't remember the last time he had fought such a futile battle. Neither could he remember if he had considered a battle futile before.

Speaking of fighting a higher "difficulty" battle, Kagami, who knew the true value of obtaining experience, had considered this an opportunity to discover new possibilities. That was why he had continued to fight, even though it was unpleasant. He believed that he wouldn't be able to change, no matter how much time passed, if he didn't clash with them here and now.

Even without the fear of death, he could recognize the futility of this battle. However, since it had made him think about trying to battle, this was a wall he would surely have to overcome before he could be the victor of this dubious challenge. That was why Kagami would fight. Lacking the fear of death allowed him to fight this futile battle, without hesitation.

Before someone could overcome this wall, even if they assumed that they were a god, they would have to be able to change themselves. That's right, until he came out victorious, it would be a dangerous but exciting battle.

"This time...might be a little bit stupid...and dangerous."

However, Kagami muttered that while sending the giant Monster that had caught up to him flying several meters backwards. In the process, he received wounds from the surrounding Monsters, which had used this opportunity to attack.

"Although I still have some stamina left...without a doubt, this is impossible. It's too much trouble, and there's still a good several thousand of them left...I might be done for."

Even though Kagami still had some stamina, he quickly concluded that this was as far as he could go.

Kagami would only fight if he could imagine himself as the victor. However, it was a completely different matter when he couldn't see himself winning.

Even up until now, he had been optimistic by thinking "I wonder if I will win??", and would only decide to quickly run away if he was trapped in a situation that had a 100% chance of becoming **【Useless】** . On the other hand, if there was even a slight possibility of winning, Kagami would not stop fighting. This was because those fights were not **【Useless】** .

Until now, Kagami had chosen his battles by deciding which ones were **【Useless】** or **【Unlikely】** .

"Aah...What have I been doing?"

However, this time, there was no doubt that it was a battle where he would lose 100% of the time. He would lose and die, without running away. Everything that he had accumulated until now would be destroyed. Even though he understood that, Kagami had not thought about trying to run away.

Why?

It was because he hadn't thought of this battle as useless.

"Well then, I wonder how many of them have disappeared?"

If enough of the Monsters here vanished, it was possible that the Adventurers in Salumeria would regain their morale. Even if the path to coexistence with Demon's was far away, Alice and Takako, as well as those with similar mindsets, would surely be able to reach it somehow, someday.

The town would definitely be rescued if that happened. They would be able to prevent the long war looming on the horizon by occupying this place. Kagami thought that the best method of doing this was to not spread that hatred. That possibility alone was sufficient for him.

Kagami hadn't placed his bet on winning the fight, but on the 【Path of Coexistence】

.

“Why am I...smiling like this?”

As he thought, it was exciting. Before overcoming this, he made an opportunity for his own path, one that he had set for himself. Although he might not be able to see it, Kagami imagined a scene where he opposed this world's way of life, and his strength began to overflow from within him.

He had already strengthened his resolve. He would fight until he reached his absolute limit. He would run away if he could run away. If it was impossible, he would die and never have any regrets about it.

“Yosha! All of you come at me! As long as I'm alive, I won't let you into Salumeria. Even if I lose my life, I won't let you take away the only possibility for my dream to come true.!”

Right when he declared this, Kagami charged forward, piercing through the giant Monster's body with all of his might, blowing it away in a straight line. The Monster became a bullet that shot towards the group of Monsters behind it, scattering and grinding them all into dust, as if Kagami had used Wide Area Annihilation Magic. Immediately afterwards, the surrounding Monsters came flying at him in unison. He kicked one of them with a Reverse Kick, grabbed the Monster that was now bent over, and threw it towards the Monsters that had followed it. When it hit them, the group of Monsters were blown off their feet at the speed of lightning and were pulverized.

Without even giving them time to breathe, Kagami immediately struck with his next attack, continuing to deal with the Monsters. Meanwhile, other Monsters flew into the sky while shooting Heat Beams. Since his view of the flying Monsters was impeded, Kagami didn't noticed them until their Heat Beams had already burst through the bodies of the Monsters around him and approached him.

“Your dream is not just a possibility. I won't...let them take your life!”

Kagami had honestly believed that he would be struck by the Heat Beams that had suddenly appeared. However, they vanished into thin air without touching Kagami's body, as though a mysterious force was surrounding him.

“Holy Thunder – Furious Beheading Wave!”

In the next moment, the name of a Skill was roared out, even though it could be used without shouting, and several Monsters in the back were eliminated by a Light Blade surrounded by electricity that surged forth.

“I’m the Hero...it’s impossible for me to not fight...and let you, a Villager, fight!”

Kagami turned around and looked towards the direction of the voice. What immediately entered his view was Krul, who was releasing magic power with the palm of her hand pointing as if she was casting magic on Kagami, and Rex, who was wielding his sword.

“Oho, the Hero and the Sage came here to die.”

Kagami said with a troubled look, not knowing why the two of them had come here.

“There’s no doubt that we came here to save you...Kagami-chan!”

Before Kagami had enough time to think about their reason, Takako, who was approaching him with a high speed, immediately passed by him. As Kagami showed a surprised expression, Takako approached the Shelled Monsters that were closing in on him and used her vigor to send them flying with a kick. Although they weren’t blown away, their shells split open like an egg and they turned into gold, just like that.

“Even Takako-chan...What are you doing?”

“We came to save you, so we won’t let Kagami-chan die.”

“Well...I can’t go back, you know? I’ll run away quickly if I can run.”

“I know that. That’s why we will defeat all of them.”

A question mark appeared over Kagami’s head when he saw Takako assuming a stance that made her look like a strong bear about to break into a run. He didn’t understand the meaning of this. The result wouldn’t change just by adding three people to the party. Yet, surely this sacrifice was good for him.

“Don’t do anything useless. Your life is important! It will trouble me if I let Takako-chan die! There is no need for the Hero and Princess-sama to lose their life either! I will be the only one to vanish.”

“If that’s the case, then I will be responsible for the part of making Kagami vanish. I’m the same as Kagami, so it’s fine for you to not bear the risk of dying in vain, you know?”

Several Monsters behind Kagami vanished as lightning poured out of the sky like rain. Menou, who seemed to be the one that shot out the lightning, walked up slowly from behind Rex.

“No, you shouldn’t be here! It’s too late now!”

“I’m the same as Kagami-dono. Right now, there is always value in your life.”

Kagami was dumbfounded by Menou’s statement. However, he broke into a smile of curiosity.

“Aah! As I thought, it’s tattered! It’s becoming a shabby rag!”

He then became aware of the fact that the wounds on his body had been healed. Even if he had his Skill, there was no way for them to heal so quickly. Tina came running forward in a panic as she spoke in amazement.

Palna followed close behind her, muttering “It would be troublesome if you died on us.”

“...Is it true that you’re fine? You’ll die, you know?”

“He won’t die. I won’t let him die!”

When Kagami saw Krul eagerly say this, he opened his mouth and gaped for a moment.

However, he quickly closed his mouth.

His heart became warm. The dull sensations that had always let him fight by himself gradually began to return to him. He realized that Takako’s group, that had come for

him, weren't necessarily betting on the possibility of Salumeria being safe, but on the possibility of Kagami's survival instead.

Kagami was honestly happy. Until now, there hadn't been any idiots that would associate with his unreasonable self. There hadn't been any companions who had seriously worried about his life.

The power that had overflowed from within him earlier began to overflow again, and his body throbbed with pain.

"Yosh...change of plans! Let's just go beat as many as we can and run away like chickens! Our lives are important!"

Part 2

At that moment, Kagami stomped on the ground and jumped into the air as he tried to eliminate the dangerous enemies flying in the sky. His reasoning was that, if the attacking Monsters were limited to the ground, the number of inevitable attacks would decrease, increasing the possibility of everyone's survival.

"I'll make it so that they will be unwilling to fly any more!"

After he vigorously jumped up, he slammed some of the flying Monsters down to the ground with an ankle sweep. Then he jumped back up into the sky, aiming at the remaining Monsters in the sky. He unleashed a kick towards them and they were forcibly blown back, as if they were bullets shot out of a musket. They crashed into Monsters that were standing on the ground, changing them all into gold. Kagami did this repeatedly.

"Ugh...!?"

However, he wasn't able to continue. The Monsters standing on the ground read Kagami's trajectory, predicted where he would fall along the way, and threw giant boulders at him, striking him down.

As expected, Kagami could not repel or completely block the attacks. He was blown back by the giant boulders and his body slammed into the stone wall that presided over this deserted area.

"Kagami-san, are you alright?"

Krul's group, who had been fighting on the ground, saw what happened to him. They moved towards the wall that Kagami had collided with while warding off the nearby Monsters. The giant boulders that had collided with him looked as though they were embedded into the stone wall. When Krul saw this hopeless sight, she could imagine the result and unintentionally yelled out as she headed towards the stone wall.

Her needless worries soon dissipated. The giant boulders that had been buried in the stone wall suddenly broke apart and a worn-out Kagami appeared.

"No, I'm not alright at all. It feels like I will die soon."

Kagami heaved himself out of the stone wall and blood flowed out of his face, like a fountain. Although it looked like he was in bad shape, he still had energy left to fight.

“It’s not just feeling like you will die soon! Why are you assuming that you are still in any condition to fight?! Please fight more carefully, since we will end up dying if you die!”

When she saw Kagami sending her a puzzling “good sign” despite the situation, Tina immediately rushed forward and began to heal his wounds with Healing Magic while becoming furious.

“Isn’t living important!? What about the battle plan!? It’s a surprise that you’re even alive right now!”

“This is the result of letting life be important to you. Getting beaten up.”

“Please don’t assume that you can still fight with injuries as large as these!”

“You should have more confidence in your abilities.”

She looked at Kagami, who was smiling despite his great injuries, and even though she didn’t understand it well, she felt annoyed and embarrassed. She then continued to silently heal Kagami’s wounds.

“...My name is Tina. What would you end up doing if a Monk left the vanguard? Please don’t push yourself too hard.”

Tina said in embarrassment as she continued to heal him with Healing Magic without looking at him. These lines made Kagami’s eyes spin, and he reflected on himself as he smiled, remembering the words Krul had spoken previously; “I also can’t say that I’m a human.”

“Besides Takako-chan, battling as a party wasn’t really needed. Sorry, I’ll be more careful.”

“Muu...I’m begging you.”

As Kagami had his wounds healed by Tina's Healing Magic, he once again got fired up, and with a "Iyoshaa!", rushed towards Rex, who had continued to endure the Monsters' attacks at the vanguard until Kagami's wounds were healed. He sent the Cyclops that was trying to smash Rex flying.

"Yosh, party play! Let's cooperate and fight together!"

When Kagami said that, everyone there similarly thought that the one who hadn't cooperated while they fought was just him. However, without any of them retorting that he was easygoing, they all turned to face the Monsters, which had immediately started to pursue them from all directions.

"Princess-sama and that voluptuous magician! Can't you use Wide Area Annihilation Magic?"

"It's Palna! Can't you please stop calling me that way? Both of us can use it!"

"Yosh! Palna and Princess-sama! I leave the spell casting up to the two of you!"

"What are you planning on doing!?"

"First, I'll clean up the flying Monsters that are indiscriminately attacking the ground!"

When she heard this, Palna became aware of the reason Kagami had attacked the Monsters that were flying in the air earlier. Since it was normal for airborne Monsters to be attacked by archers and magicians that specialized in long range attacks, when she saw that he was challenging them barehanded, she truly understood that he had been fighting alone until now.

"The chants have finished! I'm able to cast it at any time!"

"Me too! What should we do? Even if we fire it towards the sky from here, won't we only hit two to three at most? Most of the magic will fly away into the sky if we do that."

After Palna and Krul finished their chants and yelled out to Kagami, he immediately moved over to them and tightly grabbed onto their bodies, as if he was reversing their positions.

“H-hey, what are you doing at such a time...wh-where the hell are you touching!?”

“This is sexual harassment!”

Kagami ignored the two of them as they cried into his ears. Kagami muttered “Fire yourselves up”, before kicking the ground, just as he had done earlier, and jumping into the sky. Krul and Palna closed their eyes and, without letting their voices out, endured the impact that was released from the sudden kick.

“Yosha, cast your magic from here! Rather than casting it from below, isn’t it easier to hit a lot of Monsters if you’re at the same height?”

As they listened to Kagami raise his voice, the two of them understood his intentions and released the Wide Area Annihilation Magic towards every Monster in front of them. What Palna and Krul casted was a Blazing Flame Wave and a Surging Lightning Wave respectively, which both traveled in a horizontal direction.

Since the two’s levels were low, they couldn’t annihilate all of them, but the attacks did deliver great damage to the flying Monsters and turned nearby Monsters into gold. After the magic finished casting, the two of them, who were being held by Kagami, landed on the ground, and Palna let out a “Guu!” from the impact.

“You...though it’s fine, since there was a result, properly warn us the next time you do this...ok?”

After saying this, Palna, who was a magician with a weak endurance, headed towards Tina and requested her to cast Healing Magic, despite the low amount of damage she had taken. Although Krul had also taken a little damage, she healed herself with Healing Magic and dashed at Kagami, causing him to immediately stiffen up.

“Kagami-san! Exactly who do you think this princess is!?”

“Ueh...I was thinking that she felt like a companion who was cooperating with me. I thought that it was a good attack.”

Kagami thought that it was strange for Krul to be angry if they wanted to survive. After he said that, Krul muttered “...Companion,” happily, and immediately put on a serious face once more as she faced the Monsters. Then, as she readied her weapon, she said, “I’ll forgive you, since it can’t be helped.”

Part 3

“It was a good strategy Kagami-chan. Thanks to you, the battle became easier.”

The barehanded Takako gave Kagami a thumbs up while dishing out roundhouse kicks at the group of Monsters standing on the frontline. The attacks that had been pouring down from the sky had decreased and, as Krul and Tina’s Defense Magic spread out, the time spent evading attacks also dropped, allowing them to focus on the enemy’s vanguard.

“Rex-chan! I’ll leave the subdued enemies to you! I’ll take care of the tougher ones!”

“Did you say...Rex-chan? Don’t fuck with me! This Hero’s attacks will cut down any opponent! What kind of Role do you have that lets you use a Martial Artist’s skill...?!?”

The moment Rex tried to complain, Takako grabbed the Cyclops that stood in front of her and fired off a punch towards the Monsters wearing stone armor.

The stone armor was pulverized like a piece of Styrofoam, and the large stone Monsters were blown back as Takako instantly struck the holes in their armor. Incidentally, she also blew away Rex’s confidence.

“Takako-chan has a perverse Skill that ignores the opponent’s defense, so be at ease, since it doesn’t really mean that you’re weak. If anything, Takako-chan is the weird one.”

Kagami patted Rex’s shoulders with a ‘pon’ as if trying to calm him down.

“I don’t want you to say that she’s weirder than you! Shit...What happens if I get past Level 100? Will it make a difference? If I become Level 100, then surely...!”

“It would become more troublesome for Demon King-sama if you’re able to get stronger...! Right now, you must fight, but being that eager...how troublesome!”

Rex, Takako and Menou continued to exert themselves without breaking their formation as they maintained their distance from the enemy, standing at fixed intervals from each other. Palna and Krul fired off their Magic, which flew past the trio towards the Monsters, and Kagami defeated the Monsters that weren’t instantly slain.

Tina was on standby behind them, healing them with Healing Magic when they were injured by the never-ending Monsters. Even though Takako, Rex, and Menou had been taking evasive actions and even breaking formation to avoid damage, they become resolute and began to face the enemy without fear of injury in order to protect Tina, who was holding up the rear.

Kagami's group fought while forming a circle behind the stone wall, but this didn't last long. The intervals between Monster waves became chaotic, and soon the Monsters were unable to cooperate with each other as allies.

Kagami's group was exhausted. They were also mentally fatigued because they hadn't felt any indication that the Monster horde would end.

"Hey...When exactly will we get rid of these Monsters?"

Rex muttered as sweat formed on his cheeks, since he had not personally experienced a battle to the death before.

"To have tried to fight them by himself...Kagami is a really big idiot!"

Takako's composure vanished and she put on a serious expression as she yelled that out. She left Kagami and Menou behind, jumping onto the Cyclops' chest while sweat oozed out of her whole body.

"There are still some remaining. Though, it's fortunate that none of the Monsters seem to be heading towards Salumeria."

Kagami had seen her jump into the sky to survey the situation, so he relayed her information to everyone before immediately kicking around several of the Monsters that had landed.

Hearing that, everyone's expressions became clouded, seemingly becoming bitter. When Kagami saw this he smiled and muttered, "A chance, huh?" He moved to stand beside the stone wall that had been behind him and suddenly struck it with all of his power.

An explosion resounded as the stone wall was bashed in, leaving a cavity, as if it had been pierced through. When the debris cleared, Salumeria's gate and a deserted plain without Monsters appeared.

"Yosh, I'm already at my limit! Let's run away!"

While everyone there admired Kagami in their hearts, for having done his best until now, they ignored him and yelled instead. Nobody bothered to react to Kagami's voice as they tried to continue fighting.

"What the hell are you all doing! Isn't your life important? Quickly, run away!"

Although he yelled out repeatedly, nobody even tried to respond to Kagami. On the contrary, Takako, Rex, and Menou were trying to combat the Monsters without minding him.

"We can...still fight! If we ran away from here...it would be the end for Salumeria, wouldn't it?"

Tina muttered with a shrug while showing a pained look, since her magic power was at its limit.

"No, no...there isn't any meaning if you guys die here!"

"Saying that you want to run away...you can't run if everyone else doesn't, right?"

As Palna showed an expression of really wanting to run away, she cast a Wide Area Annihilation Magic on the Monsters that were in the front.

"Takako-chan! What the hell are you doing! This is an opportunity! Run away!"

After he called out, a serious-looking Takako quickly turned around, then looked forward again to attack the Monsters.

"Hey, Takako-chan! Are you listening to me!?"

"Kagami-chan...are you playing a trick on me?"

Takako looked back again and muttered as she completed one of her attacks before resuming her stance to fight against the Monsters.

“You’re also playing a trick...on me.”

Krul muttered as if she was acting in concert with Takako, and cold sweat flowed down Kagami’s cheeks.

“Kagami-san...it seems like you probably have some stamina left in you, right? Aren’t you preserving your energy?”

To that, Kagami replied, “I give up on this,” and realized that, even though he’d acknowledged the truth of what they were trying to do, he had been preserving his energy, just as Krul had said. Rather than saying that he was been preserving it, if he joined Rex’s group and fought, he wouldn’t have to use up all of his power.

Therefore, Kagami was confident that he could deal with the Monsters at the halfway point. Besides, he had been fighting to ensure the safety of Rex’s group. When Rex’s group had reached their limits, only part of him had tried to fight and as he preserved his strength in order to run.

Of course, he had planned to run away properly, since their lives were important. Even though he had tried to trick them, they hadn’t even tried to listen to him. In spite of him saying that he would stay behind, he had just planned to fight by himself before saying “Uwah~ the stone wall collapsed~” and then heading past the stone wall.

“No, no! Run away properly? If we just fight without thinking, would we really be given a chance to run away?”

“If that’s the case, then please fight now, while we are here!”

Although Krul yelled that out, Kagami didn’t want that to happen since he couldn’t guarantee the lives of Krul’s group if he fought in a separate area. However, even if the effects of the Skills that let him fight allowed him to protect them, it would be too much for him, no matter what he did.

If he had fled at the beginning, Kagami wouldn’t have had to make that choice, even though Rex’s group had resolved themselves to agree with him. Yet, somehow, he couldn’t throw away the possibility of saving Salumeria.

He didn't want to give in to the present situation where he preserved his power, even though he was certain to flee like he had promised. Kagami couldn't help but throw away such selfish thoughts.

"It looks like you're suffering quite a bit, Kagami-san."

"Isn't that natural? I have to protect these guys' lives, it's very troublesome. I feel that we should somehow decide to throw away Salumeria, I...nn!?"

Although Kagami had replied, without thinking, to the words that were asked far too naturally from behind him, he soon realized that something was wrong with the voice. When he turned around, he made eye-contact with someone who definitely shouldn't be there.

"It's fine already, Kagami-san."

Alice, who had seemingly passed through the hole Kagami had opened, faced him with a shy smile. Alice had been standing there, without fear of the troop of Monsters, as if it were natural.

At this moment, before the surprised Kagami could ask Alice why she was there, a ferocious roar, which hadn't come from the Monsters, rang out. This sound wasn't something that could be produced by a single person; it had clearly come from a group of people. It was loud enough to make one imagine that their numbers were not inferior to that of the Monsters.

"It's my turn to be your strength this time, Kagami-san."

The moment Alice said this, a large explosion engulfed their surroundings. Although he was confused for a moment, when a large group of Adventurers burst out from beside the stone wall, Kagami understood the situation.

Kagami trembled, as if they were all praising him, and joy swelled up within every part of his body, making him unintentionally hug Alice. She smiled at him and he smiled back.

""""""WE WILL PROTECT SALUMERIAAAAAAA!""""""

The moment these words rang in his ears, the restless Rex became livelier and, with all of his might, released all of his power towards the Monsters before him in one attack.

Part 4

“Kagami-chan!”

“Aah, I heard you! It’s still too early to give up, you know!”

After calling out Kagami’s name and sending some Monsters flying with her fists, Takako looked back, as Kagami gave Alice a thumbs up and said “Good Job” with a smile.

“It’s thanks to Kagami-san.”

Muttered Alice, feeling extremely satisfied.

“Bringing back the Adventurers that had fled was simple, you know? All of them were saying, ‘I want to rescue...the people who are fighting!’, but everyone lost their will to fight in front of the large group of Monsters...they couldn’t move.”

Listening to Alice, Rex, Tina, Krul and Palna understood the other Adventurers’ pain. They themselves shared the same feelings, in no small amount.

“But you see, I realized that it’s useless for everyone to be afraid, after seeing Kagami-san and Krul-san’s group fighting without giving up. They said that, surely, they could do something as well. They received courage from seeing Kagami-san’s group, you know.”

Alice’s words left a deep impression on Krul. Certainly, she had believed that the Adventurers would try to assist them once they saw her party, but this was originally Kagami’s achievement. They decided to move because it was impossible for Kagami to fight by himself. After seeing their appearance, Salumeria’s Adventurers had gathered together to face off against the Monsters.

One person. Just one normal Villager, whose will should have been smashed to bits in this hopeless situation. Unable to suppress her heart’s excitement for the current development, Krul revealed a smile.

It wouldn’t change the fact that it was a dangerous situation, but she couldn’t help thinking that this was really amazing. She hadn’t read any such epics in the Arcasia

Kingdom archives within the castle. One person, by challenging 10,000 Monsters, moved the hearts of thousands of Adventurers...It wasn't a Hero, just a normal Villager. There hadn't been any humans in the past that had done something so unbelievable.

Without a doubt, this event would be passed down as a legend. Being able to witness such a legend unfold before her, she couldn't help but feel excited.

Rex had the same thoughts as well. Although he felt the same, he was also quite jealous. His jealousy made him feel regretful, but he respected Kagami from the bottom of his heart. If someone asked if he could accomplish the same, he could only answer no.

"Fu...fufufuhahahaha! Interesting...This Villager is really interesting! Since that is the case, show it to me, the unimaginable conclusion from your struggles in this battle!"

Rex and the others, who had exhausted their bodies, felt their strength return. It was a revitalizing medicine in this hopeless situation that they had believed would end them. Their hearts couldn't help but tremble as they were invited to participate in this legendary fight.

"Yosh...well then, shall we do our best? Tch, in front of me is...Alice! Get away from here, it's dangerous!"

"Yes, I understand, Kagami-san. I'm really sorry? No matter what, I wanted Kagami-san to be happy when I told you this."

At her words, Kagami struck Alice's head with a 'pon' and muttered, "Don't worry about it," to her, and then urged her to pass through the hole that was opened up in the stone wall behind them. At that moment,

"It wasn't me that created an opportunity that allowed the other Adventurers to fight, but Alice. The one who is the most amazing is...Alice, who prioritized their desire to help and brought along these Adventurers, despite being a Demon. It was you!"

As he said this, Kagami smiled at Alice. She yelled back, "Yeah!," and happily rushed along to the hole in the stone wall as moisture appeared in her eyes. After confirming that Alice had gone back behind the stone wall, Kagami's expression stiffened, and he turned towards the Monsters that were still spread out before him.

“Change of plans...Let’s aim to win! Let’s go all out against them!”

“There’s no need to say that!”

While Kagami was yelling that, Rex quickly finished off the enemies in front of him with his sword and rushed out ahead of Kagami. Krul and Palna continued to fire off Wide Area Annihilation Magic at the Monsters before them as well.

“Geez...If I had thought about how those spirited fellows might have become my enemies in the near future, I would have become dispirited...Well, besides that, I’m just serving Demon King-sama and Alice-sama!”

“Menou-chan! Since Kagami-chan is bringing out his full power, cooperate with the other adventurers and protect Rex’s group! Kagami-chan! We’re fine over here, so have at it as you like!”

As this was said, Menou gave Kagami a thumbs up, and Takako blew a kiss at Kagami. Kagami raised his voice with a “Yoshaa!”, firing him up as he endured the overwhelmingly powerful attacks, and when his reserved power explosively broke out, he instantly closed in on the Cyclops that stood in front of him.

Kagami then firmly grasped the Cyclop’s leg like he would grab a log and dispatched Monsters by swinging the Cyclops around like a weapon. He stylishly flung it while forging onward, annihilating several Monsters at once.

“””””U00000000000H”””””

A lot of the adventurers who saw this scene were dumbfounded, and after seeing Kagami dispatch the Monsters using the Cyclops, they let out a splendid war cry to raise their morale.

“Let’s go, we will win! What the hell is that guy...He’s too amazing! He looks like a Monster, no matter how you look at it!”

“Either way, it’s fine! He has always been fighting for us! Our pride as knights would be done for if we don’t repay our debt! Don’t fall behind!”

There were those who brandished their longswords, those who began casting spells, and those who drew their bows powerfully, but like Kagami, they all forged onwards and began to fight higher leveled Monsters than them. Those who were there didn't really think about whether they were weaker than their opponents; they just had their feelings of wanting to protect this city, and believed that it might be possible if they backed this man. With a cry, they clashed with the Monsters.

“Follow...MEEEEEEEE!”

As for Kagami, such a sensation was a first for him. All of them were united by this one purpose and fought against the Monsters. It was difficult to push aside the fear brought on by the limiting concept of Levels, and a large number of people struggled to push aside thoughts of how it was a reckless and impossible challenge. Kagami couldn't help but feel that these new possibilities would change these people.

Kagami didn't have any doubts at that moment. Even if there were high leveled Monsters in front of him, he would surely win somehow. The people who had come here on his behalf would surely stand against the Monsters, just like him, and would succeed somehow. Kagami believed this, so he cast away his guard and forced his way through the middle of the group of Monsters.

A path leading through the Monsters was created, like a giant cannonball had passed through, revealing the dry ground of the wasteland.

The created path was immediately closed off by the other Monsters. Although the Adventurers weren't able to see Kagami clearly, they immediately understood that he was struggling greatly against the Monsters. Meanwhile, Monsters were being blown out of the center and into the sky, one by one.

Nobody thought that it was “useless to continue on like this,” and decided to try and do the best that they could do.

Part 5

Afterwards, together with Kagami's outstanding power, the seemingly endless battle returned to normal. The number of enemies had gradually decreased, and the people fighting could feel the battle nearing its end.

"Just a little bit more! Go all out everyone! Just don't overdo it...Stand down immediately if you think it's impossible!"

"D-...Don't make me laugh! Who said it's impossible? I still have some strength left!"

As if they could see the end, the Adventurers raised their morale by saying, "The battle will soon end, victory is certain." However, they were betrayed by their exhausted bodies despite their chant. Most of the Adventurers were breathing heavily and wore pained expressions.

Those who were fighting had already exhausted all of their healing and attack magic. Those who had emptied their important mana reserve somehow endured and continued to fight on the frontlines by using healing items, which they had replenished as they traveled between Salumeria and the Atros wilderness.

Nonetheless, the usage of healing items was prevalent. The continuous usage caused their effects to gradually weaken, and in the end, the Adventurers that relied on those items could only withdraw from the warfront. A lot of Adventurers had withdrawn, and those left behind didn't have any other methods to fight in this bitter battle. When things began to appear hopeless, they finally saw the end. There was no reason for it to not raise the Adventurer's morale.

"Menou-chan...are you alright? Tch...Can you still go at it?"

People like Takako and Menou were no exceptions to having a powerful presences. Menou had already used up all of his magic power and begun fighting Monsters by using hand-to-hand combat as he covered Takako's back.

"But...it's surprising. Menou-chan, you're quite knowledgeable in Taijutsu, aren't you? You'd make a great rival."

“Stop joking around Takako-dono. I merely dabbled in it, and even if I fight barehanded, it’s only possible in this battle. I’m far inferior to Takako-dono.”

As they spoke, they saw the end of the battle finally drawing near, igniting their fighting spirits once more.

“Rex-san! Are you safe? I’ve brought a new potion!” (*Xant: The original had ‘Healing Item’*)

As this was said, Tina, who had made a round trip from Salumeria City, rushed over to Rex while holding a large amount of healing items, such as glass bottles that were filled with liquid.

In contrast to Takako and Menou, who still had the energy to fight, Rex was already at his limits. He had lasted long enough that anyone would have thought that he had done well in fighting until now, but Rex had continued to fight at the forefront.

Consequently, he had overdrawn his endurance to the point of needing to use his sword for support.

“It’s fine...More potions are useless. No matter how many I drink, there aren’t any effects...it just causes stomach pain.”

“If that’s the case, then let’s withdraw. We will just be in danger if we remain!”

“...I refuse. I’m the Hero. From start to finish.....I must carry the hopes that everyone holds. It’s more than just those guys.....It’s impossible for me to give up! I’m not afraid of death.....I will muster my courage!

Then he mustered up the strength he couldn’t bring out before, and Rex drew the sword he’d stabbed into the ground. However, immediately after wielding it, a slight shock ran through his head with a light ‘kon.’

When he managed to look behind him, he saw a slightly angry Krul, who was grasping the staff that had struck Rex.

“It takes courage to run away. Instead of fighting in vain, leave it to those who can still fight. At the very least, let your body rest. Surely there is no need to continue doing your best all by yourself?”

As she said this, Krul walked a short distance away from him and pointed at the center of the still numerous group of Monsters. When Rex looked at the area she was pointing to, he saw Kagami. As lively as ever, he continued to fight the Monsters with the same vigor he had held at the start of the battle.

Amongst those who were exhausted, only Kagami had continued to struggle like always.

“...What’s wrong with him? Hasn’t he always been fighting by himself?”

“Earlier, Kagami-san took a break like a normal person would, you know? He even said, ‘Phew, I’m tired.’”

Rex leaked out an “Eh?” and looked at the absentminded Krul with surprised expression. As if she had also seen Kagami, Tina nodded in agreement, supporting Krul.

“Thanks to Kagami-san’s skill, if he takes a break, he will heal without needing healing items...It’s quite crafty, you know. But, that person has been fighting while relying on everyone.”

Speaking of the breaks Kagami had taken, it was simply because he had believed in those who were fighting for him. He thought that they could endure without him by doing their best, so Kagami took a break and laid down in this ‘battlefield of trust’ while watching over everyone as they fought.

“I’m no match...for that guy.”

After saying that with a smile, Rex stabbed his sword into the ground once again, and relaxed his stance.

“It’s...the truth. Being Level 999 is really amazing.”

Tina muttered in support as she watched Kagami fighting swiftly.

“No...what’s truly amazing about him isn’t his high level. He has the power to do things without being bound by other people’s actions, as if were natural.”

Krul also agreed with Rex, saying “That’s...true,” as she observed Kagami, who continued to fight.

“Don’t be stereotypical...? I see. Now I understand the meaning of those words from before.”

Thinking that it was fine to leave it to Kagami, who was beating Monsters one after another in an area far away from him, he dropped down onto the ground.

Most of the allied Adventurers were injured, and even though they were nearly defeated, about 90% of the Monster troop had vanished. Even though there was still roughly 10% of them left, he ended up thinking that Kagami would handle it somehow.

“Ara...taking a break? Good work out there.”

The slow Palna appeared next to Rex, holding a large amount of potions in her hands.

“He really did do it...somehow.”

Palna muttered while watching the still fighting Kagami.

“Even though he has that much power, the way he acts...it’s like he’s an ally of Demons.”

Although she was surprised by the unbelievable sight that was right before her eyes, she muttered that in dissatisfaction, as if she didn’t agree to it.

“If you gossip about it...it will come back to haunt you.”

After a while, Takako and Menou staggered over to Rex’s group and their collection of potions, as if their stamina had been completely depleted.

“Geez...as expected, it’s useless. Tina-chan, was it? Did you set aside the potions for us...?”

After seeing Takako’s ‘defeated image’, due to becoming completely exhausted from using up all of her energy, Tina hurriedly opened one of the potions and handed it over. Although Takako drained it all at once and even used up several more of them afterwards, she wasn’t visibly healing yet.

“As expected, it’s already useless for m-me.”

As she said this, Takako dropped down next to Menou. As Takako quickly retired, Palna watched the exhausted Menou recover his mana and started to direct her palm at him, thinking ‘Wouldn’t it be easy to kill him right now?’

“At the very least, please listen to Kagami-chan’s story.”

However, her body stiffened and she withdrew her hand, despite looking like she wanted to say something, immediately after being called out to by Takako-chan, who seemed to have completely seen through her.

“I look forward...to what’s coming soon.”

As if her own feelings had quieted down, Palna bit her lips and muttered that.

While this exchange was happening, Kagami had defeated one Monster after another. It was already nearly over when the Salumerian Adventurers’ shouts of victories rang out.

“It’s troublesome...we must proceed onto Scenario Street.”

At that time, while no one there understood what the words they had heard meant, a noise that resounded directly in everyone’s heads could be heard. Although Rex had thought that it was an auditory hallucination, he concluded that it wasn’t after noticing the people around him become bewildered in the same way.

“...W-...What...is that.”

Immediately after the surprised Rex muttered that, everyone there turned pale.

The vibrations that had nearly felt like cannon shots were merely **【Footsteps】**. The source was a body covered in armor, enough to make them think that no attacks could damage it, regardless of what was used. It was tall enough that it stood higher than the clouds. A giant Monster, ten times larger than a Cyclops, came from the direction of the Demon King’s Castle, slowly advanced towards Salumeria.

Part 6

“I have never seen nor heard of such...a Monster.”

The books that recorded the Monsters discovered by humans until now were kept in the Royal Library. The biggest one on record, worthy of mentioning since it was 18 meters in length, would surely be the existence known as the **【Dark Dragon】** .

Despite that, this illusive existence from who knows where was bigger than all the other approaching Monsters.

“...What is that? I don’t know, I too...have never seen such a Monster. No, is that even a Monster in the first place?”

Originally, only Menou, who had naturally recognized it, was surprised upon noticing this giant warrior. Its presence, though, was capable of inducing Menou to tremble in fear, but he wasn’t the only one.

Everyone felt weak in the knees just by looking at it, and although they had been fighting while repressing the instinct to run away until now, they were sure to fail this time around.

Just as Menou had said, they didn’t know whether or not it was a Monster. The bipedal Monster that was covered in blacksteel armor glared at them sharply. Its body was wrapped in a black aura, and in its eyes was a golden glitter. The ground trembled as it advanced slowly, step by step.

“...Let’s retreat. As expected, there’s nothing else we can do against that thing.”

Although surprised by the giant enemy in front of her, Takako muttered that while keeping her composure.

“Kuh...We’ve endured until now, why should we run away!? Don’t be foolish...I-I won’t give up!”

After he had said that, Rex took out the sword that had been stabbed into the ground and held it before him. In this situation, Takako’s judgement had been correct.

However, since an opportunity to meet his goal of overcoming an opponent several times stronger than him had finally arrived, Rex did not want to give it up so easily.

“Face reality...What can you do against that with your strength? Although I don’t know what that giant Monster is, this...this isn’t a situation you can easily solve. This is a genuinely...unprecedented and dangerous situation.”

Even without Takako’s words, everyone could understand it. Even if they retreated for the time being, they would still have to fight that thing, because there were still humans gathered in Salumeria. It was clearly an opponent they could not oppose. In other words, they had to face this opponent in this country, before it could affect the survival of humanity on a global scale.

Originally, humans and demons had both possessed overwhelming power, shown through their ability to control what was known as a 【Country】. However, the humans may have been one-sidedly sending Heroes as assassins to the Demon King’s Castle to this day, in order to avoid challenging them in the open. Not once had the Demons ever come to attack them.

“Kagami-chan...retreat from here at once! Although it’s regrettable...aren’t you the one that doesn’t get it!?”

In spite of the approaching blacksteel armor giant, Takako yelled out at Kagami, who stood there staring at the foe that approached with his hands on his hips.

“So huge.”

Kagami used just those words to describe it.

Immediately after, he cracked his neck with a ‘kokikoki’ and began to run towards the blacksteel armor giant with a slightly worried look, ignoring Tatako’s warning.

“Hey...Kagami-chan!?”

Except for Takoko, everyone else was speechless. They couldn’t understand this person, who had already surprised them several times during this battle. They did know that he had no fear of death. Yet, why was he challenging the overwhelming enemies before him without fearing defeat, even though he stood no chance against them?

This man, as of this moment, had decided that he would now witness the outcome of his future actions with his own eyes, without looking away. With this resolve, he had gained a sense of duty.

“Fall back everyoneeeeeee! Run away! This is no longer an opponent we can handle!”

“Hey! But...that bastard is still there!”

“What can we do about it!? Run away! We’ve already decided that we will live!”

The Salumerian Adventurers, who had continued to fight against the remaining group of several hundred Monsters, began to retreat one after another. This was a natural action, a natural decision. Yet, an unexpected gale appeared and accelerated past the dry wasteland, heading towards the Adventurers who had disappeared towards Salumeria.

“HYAAAAAAAAAA!”

This gale flew up into the air from the dry wasteland, and just before it collided with the blacksteel armor giant, Kagami let out a roar that could be heard by everyone. Then, at that moment,

“Ka-...Kagami-san?”

Kagami had been knocked towards a large rock near Takako’s group, far away from the blacksteel armor giant.

The large three meter rock was blown to bits from the collision with Kagami, and its debris rolled around the feet of the group.

This all happened in a moment. When Kagami had tried to punch it, Kagami’s entire body had been struck by the blacksteel armor giant’s immense fist.

“R-...Run away...it’s useless! We can’t win! It’s the end for Salumeria!”

“Uwah...UWAAAAAAAAAAH!”

The Adventurers who had held on to the hope that Kagami would be able to defeat it somehow began to retreat one after another after witnessing his defeat. If you thought about it, the only ones left were the several hundred Monsters, the blacksteel armor giant, and Rex's group.

"It's the end...even if it's Kagami, it can't be helped. It's useless no matter what, with only the Adventurers here."

"Rather than that, Kagami-san is-!"

Although Krul tried to rush towards Kagami as she said this, a cloud of dust quickly swept over Kagami's body, and Alice appeared carrying a potion in her mouth.

"Kagami-san...Kagami-san! Hang in there!"

"...Alice. It's dangerous...I told you...to stand down, didn't I?"

"If I compared it to Kagami's dangers, this much is enough for me. Although everyone else ended up running away...you should be relieved since I won't. I'll be with you until the very end."

As if she was trying to assuage him, Alice smiled at the weakened Kagami, who could barely keep his eyes half-open. However, Kagami understood that the hands supporting him were trembling.

"Don't push yourself. You're trembling, right?"

The moment he said that, he placed his hand on Alice's head as if to soothe her. Then Krul, who had arrived late, forcibly pushed the Potion into Kagami's mouth.

"It's not, 'You're trembling, right?' Alice-chan is trembling in fear, worried that Kagami is being unreasonable. Why don't you understand this?"

Krul muttered that worriedly, and at those unexpected words, Kagami's gaze froze upon her. Immediately after, his gaze turned grim, and he looked in a particular direction.

"Such an amazing healing ability. You're already capable of moving even though you took so much damage. Your endurance, speed, and power are amazing too. Now I

understand why things weren't going according to schedule. I finally understand why Salumeria's Adventurers were able to resist until now. In the beginning...Although I had thought it was the Hero resisting...It was your power, huh?"

A tall man that looked similar to Menou, fully dressed in a Noble's surcoat-like garment, was floating in the air. He flew lower to be next to Kagami and looked at him.

He had pea green hair that covered his asymmetrical right eye. Using human standards, he appeared to be around 20 years old. His proof of being a Demon, horns, firmly sprouted from his head.

"Estellar...sama?"

At this moment, upon seeing the Demon floating in the sky, the surprised Menou trembled.

Part 7

“Menou, although I had always doubted that a noble would support humans, I see...it’s because you have been attending Alice-sama, who was supporting the humans? It seems that you have been faithful to Demon King-sama after all.”

After Estellar, the floating commander of the Demon Army, glared at Menou, Menou averted his eyes in a hurry, like a child being scolded by their parents, and cowered in fear. Seeing Menou’s reaction, Kagami immediately rushed to his side and tried to whisper in his ear.

“Who is he? That slightly narcissistic guy that suddenly appeared and started talking.”

“He is Estellar Urgöt-sama...He serves the Demon King-sama, like me, but is his right-hand man. He will soon have more power than Demon King-sama...Rather than that, Kagami-dono, how are your injuries?” (TN: Changed Urgot to Urgöt)

“I have completely recovered, thanks to the potions. The effects were outstanding, probably because I’ve never used them before.”

Crackling sounds rang out from the bones in Kagami’s neck, as if he had truly been healed, and he began to move his arms around like he had energy to spare. In fact, it wasn’t a performance and he had truly healed, but that didn’t mean he still had the energy to fight. Depending on the medicine used, its healing effects would weaken sooner or later.

“Can you still fight? Surely you knew that this battle of offense and defense was useless?”

Once again, Kagami tried to head towards the blacksteel armor giant that was approaching him from the front, ignoring the floating Estellar.

“The situation is dangerous so I have to do something about that thing before I defeat you. If you get in my way, I will have no choice but to fight you. Since you’re taking it easy, you have no plans to do that, right?”

“Aah...I don’t. It’s fine to challenge it as you like. Go at it until you’re satisfied.”

Estellar replied to Kagami, who had stated that boldly and without any hesitation, with a cynical smile as if he were speaking directly into his head. As soon as he finished declaring this, Kagami roared out like a gale and ran towards the blacksteel armor giant.

“It seems he still had some energy left...so what if you’re the right-hand man of the Demon King? It looks like that Villager doesn’t realize how much of an irregular he is.”

Maybe because he was unsatisfied, Rex said as much after Estellar bid Kagami off, making light of him as he ran towards the blacksteel armor giant.

“I know, but in the end, he is a Villager, isn’t he? That’s what you said, right? His Level is certainly...999? It’s surprising that there is someone who reached Level 999 as a Villager. Though becoming Level 999 in itself is unprecedented.”

Everyone there shuddered at these words. This Demon had constantly been gathering information while hiding nearby. However, since none of them had been able to detect him at all, they instantly felt the true difference in power between them.

“What do you mean by...’He is a Villager after all’?”

Krul asked that since she had not misheard Estellar’s words, and it seemed like he knew something. Although he didn’t need to answer her, he seemed like he was bored and wanted to talk about something to kill time, so he stared at Krul.

“You don’t know? A Villager’s Status Parameter is low enough to be abnormal. Warriors who put their stats in strength are at least three times stronger than Villagers, and the difference is even greater if one becomes a Hero. Humans who have the role of Hero only have to reach Level 300.”

“The benefits of being Level 999 isn’t just the Status...they also have Skills!”

“Well then, do you know what Skills he has, besides Automatic Heal?”

To that, Krul hesitated to reply, answering with a “That’s...”

“For him to have such a rare Skill like Automatic Heal is close to a miracle. In fact, there are many examples of curious Villagers who aimed beyond Level 100. It’s because a Villager’s level can be raised easily...with its disposition. Although there

aren't any that aimed for Level 999...every one of their Skills ended up being rubbish. They also had Skills that allowed them to fight by flinging a certain something with their fingers." (TN: *cough* boogers *cough*)

As a result, those who judged that it was beyond their means ended up discouraged and would fulfill their Role as a Villager. After adding on this statement, Estellar sneered as if he was denying their efforts.

"I wonder...why do you know about things like that?"

He knew too much. Although Takako, who had already known this much information, spoke whilst giving him a meaningful smile, Estellar didn't try to answer her at all.

Facing the reality that Villagers had a weak Status and Skills, the others began to feel unease since their hope, Kagami, might be useless in this desperate situation.

"Aside from the Skills, the difference in Statuses is absolute. That thing isn't an opponent that can be defeated by a fundamentally weak Villager. Look, the proof has returned."

The moment Estellar said this, Kagami crashed into the stone wall with a tremendous force, just like before, as he was sent flying by the blacksteel armor giant. Despite running towards him like before, not even several minutes had passed before he crashed into the same spot. At that moment, everyone was convinced that, even if it was Kagami, it couldn't be helped.

"That's the end of his growth. That's his value as a Level 999 Villager. Even if he has his own Skills, that thing wasn't an opponent he could fight against in the first place. No matter how many times a Villager falls, it can't be helped. This is a Villager's limit after all."

"Is that what you think?"

At that moment, the body that had collided with the stone wall leapt out, and Kagami spoke as if he still had some energy left. However, blood was gushing out from all over his body.

"So what? This time, I properly reduced the amount of damage I received...It's still a large amount though. Woah, potions. Please give me potions, Princess-san~"

After seeing Kagami stubbornly declare that, the arrogant Estellar's expression was momentarily disturbed, but it soon returned to his scornful smile.

"Certainly, his endurance is amazing. Even with his HP and Endurance, Villagers are inferior to Magicians...and, although I do not know what kinds of Skills he has, this is only thanks to Automatic Heal. It's better to give up while you still have your life."

"It's impossible for you to not try to kill us."

"Of course, I'll kill you if you get in my way. My goal is just the fall of the Fort City Salumeria."

As if discomfited by Estellar's words, Kagami's expression stiffened.

Although Kagami had confronted Estellar, as he was trying to grasp the meaning of these words, Alice quickly stood in front of him with her arms spread out, trying to protect him.

"Stop it already Estellar! These things aren't what Father wishes for! I've spoken with Father once already...and if the city falls!"

"I guess so. I do know...that these things aren't what Demon King-sama and you hope for, you know? Even if I speak with the Demon King, who is right over there, he will say the same thing, won't he?"

"Over...there?"

The moment those words were received, Alice and Menou's expressions distorted. As the words 'Over there' were uttered, the blacksteel armor giant stood before Estellar.

"Even though I can manipulate that huge power at will, it took quite a bit of time to accomplish. Using medicine to gradually weaken it to the point that it could be controlled with my power was difficult. The Demon King doesn't wish for this fight either, you know? The one who wishes for it...is me!"

"Y...You bastardddd!"

Menou, his eyes wide open, shouted at Estellar, who had declared that while laughing loudly. He clenched his hand into a fist before kicking off the ground and leaping at Estellar, who was floating in midair.

Part 8

However, Menou's suicide attack from before had depleted his stamina and magic power. Estellar threw his fist, emitting a shockwave of magic power at Menou and knocking him down to the ground without having to touch him. It looked like he had bounced off the sky.

"That blacksteel armor giant is Demon King-ossan?"

Muttered Kagami and he shifted his expressionless gaze to the blacksteel armor giant while Menou was pulling himself up from the ground.

"He's not the blacksteel armor giant. That is the Ancient Annihilation Weapon created to destroy humanity and it can only be handled with Demon King-sama's immense amount of magic power. It is the 【Mecea】. Its power is equal to that of a Hero who exceeds Level 400...Do you understand? It means that even if your Level is 999, you still aren't a match for it."

"Humanity will be annihilated...Um, we'll run away though?"

"...What do you want to say?"

"Nothing much. Anyways, we've been betrayed by this Mecea, regardless of my and the Demon King's will?"

"That's right. This is Demon King-sama's true power. It's not an opponent you guys can compete against, unless it's a Hero who exceeds Level 500."

The moment Estellar looked at Rex sarcastically and with a hideous smile, Kagami muttered "Is that so," with a smile, as if he were relieved.

"Well then, we have to save both Salumeria and the Demon King."

The moment Kagami had said that he would continue fighting, Estellar, who had been looking at Rex, hurriedly returned his gaze to Kagami, looking baffled.

“Save him...you say? What the hell are you saying? Isn't Demon King-sama an existence that humans need to defeat? Besides...do you still not understand? You can't defeat the Demon King.”

“It doesn't matter that he's the Demon King. He's fighting with humans even though he doesn't want to, right? The Demon King is a close friend of mine, and he's the father of Alice-chan. Isn't it a given for me to save him?”

At these unexpected words, Estellar's mouth gaped for a while, and although he seemed curious, he remained silent.

“Close friends with Demons? Although I thought that something had happened because of Alice-sama's actions...do you not regard Demons as enemies?...I see, with that logic, even if you reached that Level, you wouldn't go and try to kill Demon King-sama. Even though you originally had that reason...give it up. No matter how many times you lose, it's useless.”

“I won't give up.”

The moment Kagami replied, the fighting spirit in his eyes lit up again, as if he had confirmed that he was absolutely capable of doing something. Estellar looked directly at Kagami.

Immediately, without seeming discouraged, Kagami once again ran quickly towards Mecea, leaving a gale in his wake. Dumbfounded by this useless action, Estellar continued to stare at him. Then, in less than a few minutes, Kagami flew into the stone wall once again.

“P-.....Potion please.....”

Whether he'd remembered to put up a defense or not, it appeared that the damage he'd taken this time was less than before. The baffled Estellar furrowed his brows when he saw the tattered Kagami seek help from his allies.

“Yosh, I can go at it one more time. The potions are still effective.”

Kagami once again ran past them, moving towards Mecea with a gale-like speed. He did not seem discouraged, as if nothing had happened to him after he was healed. However, barely a minute had passed before he collided with the wall again.

“Yosh...that was too painful, it made me cry a bit. This thing is too dangerous, though I certainly saw a dent in its armor. I was able to get a blow in. How is it? I held true to myself.”

While this was said, he gulped down the potions that the worried Krul, Tina, and Alice were silently handing to him. Then, the wind scattered once more as Kagami rushed out again, but not even a minute had passed when he collided with the wall for another time.

“...What is it?”

At this time, Rex had a feeling of indescribable discomfort. It was that strange sensation he had felt ever since the first time he met Kagami.

“The potion’s effects have worsened...although I can’t fully heal...I can still go.”

Just like before, Kagami had immediately rushed at Mecea, but at that moment, Rex realized the source of his discomfort.

“He avoid...ed it?”

When everyone saw Kagami do this, they wore expressions of surprise.

Mecea fired off a fast punch, which was unexpected due to its giant body, and although it had previously sent Kagami flying each time before he could react, this time, he narrowly avoided being punched.

Just like that, he punched Mecea’s head, and Rex noticed that Mecea was certainly becoming frightened.

“He’s...getting faster?”

Estellar, who hadn’t noticed it before because of his condescension, realized it as he muttered that. Rex had also thought what Estellar muttered.

It made them doubt another thing; ‘Was Kagami’s power truly weaker than that of a Hero whose Level was below 300?’. Rex wondered about this because he was a Hero,

but of course, he had no way of finding out what the true power of a Level 300 Hero was.

However, he doubted that he could pull off the same movements as Kagami if he reached that level, even if he looked at his own status's growth from level one. Rex had believed that, one day, he could be Kagami's equal...however, now he thought that becoming like Kagami was beyond his ability.

"Kagami-san!"

Immediately afterward, the Mecea, which had appeared momentarily frightened, caught Kagami with its giant hand and, using a force incomparable to the previous times, forcibly threw him into the stone wall. He was engulfed in the debris of the destroyed stone wall. As the fluttering cloud of dust engulfed the surroundings, Alice cried out, looking worried, and rushed towards Kagami in a hurry.

"What did that bastard...do?"

Estellar uttered as he looked at Kagami, who was still breathing after receiving that last attack.

"Nothing at all...? I'm just...putting in some effort."

It was clear that the effects of the potions that Alice was handing him were weakening, and despite his worn out state and reduced healing speed, Kagami slowly stood up and answered Estellar.

"Just stop it...just stop it, Kagami-san! Y-you don't have to do your best anymore!"

"You stupid idiot...I have to...rescue...Alice's father, right?"

With half-opened eyes and a 'pon,' Kagami placed his hand on the worried Alice's head while staggering. However, before he could run at Mecea again, Krul and Tina, who were trying to gather potions, stepped out in front of him.

"Kagami-san...you should stop it already. It's already useless...you'll just end up dying."

"P-potions aren't really helping you anymore!"

The two of them understood that Kagami was just being reckless, so they no longer tried to give him potions, even though they had more.

“Seriously...Well, I’ll rest for a little bit, then I’ll go out one more time?”

The two of them were puzzled by these words. Even if he wanted to say something, why did this man not try to change his mind on the answer to ‘why is he capable of rescuing this person?’

“Why do you continue to fight like this?”

Palna couldn’t help but want to ask him this, despite not showing any attachment until now.

“You...could use healing magic? Rather, you had some magic power remaining?”

“Just a bit, because I retreated immediately. However, the effect will be small, since it’s not Advanced Healing Magic like Tina and Krul use. Rather than that...tell me, what’s the reason you’ve been fighting until now? What is it that you know, what is it that you think? Please, give us your reasons for taking on such a reckless battle and not opposing the Demons, or else...I’ll stop healing you.”

As she pointed her palm that was emitting a faint light at Kagami, Palna said that and glared at him, as if she thought he would run away. As if the others had realized it already, their gazes shifted to Kagami at Palna’s words. Feeling resigned to the current situation, Kagami said:

“It started when my father was killed by a Monster. It was really frustrating that I, as a Villager, was so weak, but I’ve seen many things after finding a way to become stronger.”

He had said that while sighing, but continued to speak.

“What are Roles? Who decides them? Why do Monsters drop gold? Why are we able to go shopping with the gold dropped by the defeated Monsters and use it as currency? The number one thing we don’t understand is, naturally, the Status Window. What is it? Even though no one has realized it, what’s the meaning of the display? Is it to show the benefits of our roles? Levels also have an unknown meaning.

Do we become stronger if we obtain experience from defeating Monsters of higher Levels than us? Does the way to become stronger depend on a person's Role? If so, how? The Skills too...Why do we suddenly obtain a Skill at Level 100?"

Only Estellar's face distorted at these words. Conversely, the others couldn't quite understand what he was saying. Although this was natural and considered common knowledge, they didn't understand why it was strange when Kagami mentioned them.

"I realized it when my mom was killed by humans. Humans and Demons don't really change. It's just the world fighting them with its ploy. It was rather simple after I thought about it a little. In this world, you become stronger when you defeat Monsters, and the way to lead a better, more efficient life is by obtaining gold and spending the time to outfit yourself."

However slightly, Rex's group was beginning to understand the discomfort brought on by his words. They had definitely felt as if they were being guided by something.

"We didn't doubt this since it was natural for us. It's like I was being completely manipulated by something, and I didn't realize it as I continued to fight. I couldn't realize...that the way we live is defined by the Role that we are given."

At these words, everyone of them recalled their own lives.

Tina, born as a Monk, had entered a Temple and trained there. Palna was the same. Since she was a Magician, she had strengthened her magic power and memorized incantations from many books. Krul, as a Princess, was born as a Sage, so she had devoted herself to training since she was expected to join the Demon King subjugation party. Rex, too, was the same. Since he was the Hero, he was obstructed from choosing another path, by the restraining feeling that there was something he had to do.

"Rex, seeing that you were bound by a Hero's sense of duty, I had pitied you from the bottom of my heart."

The abrasive Rex couldn't find any words to reply with as he was reminded of his past. In reality, he thought he had led a merciful life by just fighting.

"Exactly what is the value of living while being bound by your Role?"

The only one who felt like they could understand these words was Takako. She had understood the value of living the way others could after she had deviated from the path of continuous fighting.

“We...surely, it’s fine to become what you want to be, but with this world’s scheme, it tries to get in your way. I thought I was unhappy when, no matter how much time passed, I couldn’t throw away my role as a Villager. I finally gave up all hope once I reached Level 999. The amount of experience necessary for the next Level was no longer displayed on the Status Window.”

“If that’s the case...then, why have you continued to fight?”

Before he knew it, Estellar was also questioning Kagami. Disregarding their relation as enemies, he was simply worried about what Kagami had obtained after becoming the unprecedented existence of being Level 999.

“I was frustrated. I thought I was being taken for a fool. I thought I couldn’t forgive it. I had hoped to become much, much, much stronger. Then, I realized it. When I became Level 999 and acquired a new Skill...I was given the answer by this world I had always doubted.”

At that moment, Kagami displayed his Status Window before him. What was displayed was his Level of 999, and Estellar was surprised when Kagami revealed his Status Parameters. It was clear that each value in the Status Parameters were not those belonging to a Villager.

Although it wasn’t equal to a Hero’s, if a Hero temporarily became Level 999, the values on Kagami’s card would probably equal half of the Hero’s power. On that screen, there was not a single value that should have belonged to a Villager.

Then, the display on the Status Window changed. What was displayed now was one of the ten Skills Kagami had in large letters. This was what was written:

Skill: The One Who Challenges God

Effect: This person’s growth will not stop. Obtained experience is converted into a power that exceeds one’s limits.

“There are people who created the system of this world. That’s why I’ll find these guys and beat the crap out of them. We are free; we are not puppets they can manipulate!”

They were speechless. They couldn't help but be speechless. Estellar who still wore a surprised expression could only mutter, "Such a thing is..." and trembled.

This Skill granted Kagami two benefits. The first was that he was a presence akin to a **【God】**, and the other was that he caught a scent of the existence of skills that would oppose them.

"Hints have been found, you know? Although they were unable to manipulate this world since ancient times, it was always the creators selling these items for 10,000 gold. They were 'unclaimed rewards'. Well, I just had the feeling that I would need to buy one someday, but it was just a hunch."

After Palna finished casting her Healing Magic, Krul, Tina, and Alice, who had advised him to give up earlier, stood up and faced Kagami. He had recovered his stamina as he spoke, thanks to his Skills.

"This is my answer. That's why I will never give up, even if you tell me to."

He clearly declared his intention with those words.

"Finding the answer to such a thing, depends on yourself."

Kagami turned his back to them and headed towards Mecea, who was walking towards them at a really slow speed from far away.

Then he muttered, "Healing no longer works...This is the end." He abandoned the tactic of run-and-strike that he had been using until now. He bent his waist while concentrating and began to release a white aura from his entire body, bright enough to be visible.

Part 9

The overwhelming white aura swirled around Kagami. This change was too sudden, and everyone gazed at him doubtfully.

“What is that...You still have something?”

“I remembered that I can use this Skill. It’s a Skill I couldn’t use when I was Level 900. If I use it, my HP will drop to 10 and I won’t be able to move after using it. In exchange, it doubles my Status.”

“Doubles...!?”

They were shocked. Even if it only doubled Kagami’s Status for an instant, he would have a power comparable to a Level 999 Hero.

“Although I really wanted to get stronger by fighting that thing more, this isn’t the time for that, right? I’ll get strong enough to defeat that thing so...this is the end. Let’s compare our strength, shall we?”

At that moment, Rex sneered. He had managed to figure out why Kagami had become stronger without needing anyone to tell him. Considering the fact that Kagami possessed a skill that allowed him to grow stronger by gaining experience, the items that he could have obtained from fighting strong enemies, and the reason Kagami fought barehanded, there was only one conclusion. Rex realized why Kagami had rushed up to the Mecea by himself.

“The goal this time is different. If that’s the case, then you, Villager...no, Kagami! Use this!”

At that moment, Rex tossed his sword to Kagami, who stopped and caught it with one hand.

“Although it’s not the Legendary Sword, it’s still a fine sword (TN: wazamono) forged by a master craftsman. Go! Go, accomplish our goal!”

As soon as Rex finished speaking, Kagami smiled and released a pressure strong enough to push everyone back. Then, Kagami's figure disappeared. Although they could trace his path with their eyes, they couldn't actually see him.

He was moving so swiftly that, even though they couldn't see him, they could see the shockwaves left in his wake. The earth of Astro scattered into the sky, as if a series of explosions had occurred.

These invisible shockwaves approached Mecea and the enemy Monster troop. They attacked Kagami using long range Heat Beams, but none of them hit him.

【Skill: Limit Release】

This Skill didn't actually double a person's Status. Normally, humans could only exert up to 30% of their true strength. This Skill released a person's natural inhibitor and temporarily allowed them to access 70% of their true strength. Even if this was a power that appeared normally, the astonishing Kagami only pulled out twice the amount of power. With this skill, the living beings of this world could draw out power which others would be incapable of stopping.

"Even with the Level 999's growth limit, this skill doesn't give a shit about the world's ploy."

Kagami evaded several Monster attacks, quickly arriving before Mecea's feet. He gripped Rex's sword in his right hand while yelling that, and bent his waist, preparing to attack.

Immediately after, he opened his eyes, clenched his teeth, and kicked off the ground with all his power, jumping towards Mecea.

The jump of this human cannonball, which shot off directly towards Mecea at an inhuman speed, created a shockwave that blew away most of the surrounding Monsters.

Although Kagami was a mere Villager...no, it was because he was a Villager that he had accomplished such a feat.

Abandoned by God, he had continued to fight back, and no matter how many times the barrier called limits stood in his way because of his role as a Villager, he had always relentlessly overcome it. And then, the conclusion.

“My limits...I will decide them!”

He unleashed a single attack, swinging his sword upwards. He had swung the sword with all of his power as he jumped, causing the attack to surpass human limits. Just a single, unimaginable attack.

【Overbreak】

Mecea was pushed upwards by the power of Kagami's attack, and the solid, black armor was split, like a piece of paper getting sliced in half. The tip of the sword moved faster than the speed of sound, creating a hollow shockwave and quickly tore the armor apart. When the armor around Mecea's head was destroyed by Kagami's single attack, the figure of a worn out Demon King appeared.

“Hey, Shishou. It's been a while.”

Kagami, who had jumped up into the air, exchanged a glance with the Demon King and muttered those words. The Demon King lost consciousness with a smile, as if he were relieved.

“Father!”

Mecea flashed and vanished, becoming a spec of dust, as if it had been eaten by the heavens. What remained was a weakened Demon King, lying down on the barren land. His dark brown hair was combed straight back from his forehead. With his aged face and his beard, he had the features of a middle-aged man.

Douglas Balnesio. This was the Demon King's name. He was Kagami's benefactor who had allowed him to get stronger. Nine years ago, when humans and demons had just begun to doubt their relationship with each other, Kagami embarked on a journey to the Demon King without hesitation. Making it to the Demon King's abode was nothing short of a miracle. He stealthily trespassed into the Demon King's castle and, while trying to remain hidden, accidentally arrived at the Demon King's bedroom. The Demon King had taught Kagami many things after finding him.

“Alright, how do you feel?”

“It seems...you have gotten a bit stronger. Will you...kill me?”

“Nono, I have been fighting to save you, you know?”

While letting out a sigh, Kagami replied to the Demon King, who was lying down. The Demon King smiled while lightly laughing at him, and muttered ‘...Like always, you’re an odd Villager.’

From the Demon King’s perspective, someone like Kagami was rare. Only Kagami, a normal Villager who had just exceeded Level 100, would have suddenly come into his room, without any killing intent, and asked him the puzzling question, ‘What do you think of humans?’.

The Demon King felt nostalgia over the days he had used his position as a Demon to train Kagami, who had wanted the power to change his current situation.

The Villager had rushed out during his training, saying that he would somehow fix the relationship between Demons and humans, and now, here he was in front of him, nine years later.

The Demon King intuitively guessed that he had likely experienced many setbacks after hearing Kagami, who had fought to save him, mutter that and seeing a worried Alice beside him.

“I’ve made you worry...Alice.”

“Kagami-san came to save you.....Takako-chan and Rex-san’s group too.”

As she said this, the Demon King slightly shifted his unmovable body and looked at his surroundings. There was a martial artist whose physique was more rugged than his own and his servant, Menou. Then, there was the presence he guessed belonged to the Hero’s Party, who were looking at him with bewildered expressions.

“It’s quite the unique party. The Hero there...it would be easy to kill me now, you know?”

“...We have yet to reorganize ourselves. We don’t have any plans to kill you in such a situation.”

Rex gripped the sword Kagami had returned, suppressing his impatient urge, and headed towards the Monster troop surrounding the Demon King.

Even though the Monster troop had them surrounded, they didn't try to attack Kagami and Rex's group at all. Although Rex's group didn't know what they were planning, it was a very favorable situation for them. Rex's group and Kagami looked ready to fight, but they were so weak that they couldn't take another step.

Part 10

“If I decided to kill you...!”

While she spoke, Palna pointed her palm at the Demon King. This was just an empty threat, since she no longer had any magic power. Back when her life had been in danger, she had genuinely wanted to see his reaction in a similar situation. Would he show an ugly appearance as he begged for his life? Or would he accept it without complaints?

However, the Demon King’s reaction greatly differed from Palna’s expectations. The Demon King laughed. He laughed regrettably, like it couldn’t be helped. As if he were accepting the world’s ploy.

Alice was standing next to her father and looked at Palna with teary eyes, as if pleading for her to “Stop it.”

“I won’t allow you to kill Alice-sama and Demon King-sama as long as I’m alive.”

Palna’s mood worsened, feeling as if she had been toyed with by fate. After seeing Menou stand in her way to protect Alice and the Demon King, she wordlessly retracted her hand and turned away.

“Menou...I’m really thankful you assisted Alice. I’m proud to have a subordinate like you.”

“Don’t be preposterous...Everything regarding Alice-sama is thanks to Kagami-dono.”

After conversing with Menou, he looked at Alice and Kagami with a ‘fuu’. As he watched Alice forcibly stuff the last potion down Kagami’s throat, the Demon King smiled. He believed from the bottom of his heart that sacrificing his life would be a cheap price to pay if it accomplished his ideals.

“But...it is necessary to know the true intentions behind these events. Estellar...you, what are you planning to do?”

At the Demon King's words, everyone turned to face Estellar who was nonchalantly floating in the air. Estellar had been quiet, as if contemplating something, while gazing at Kagami and the Demon King.

"Although I had put in considerable effort to borrow the Demon King's power in order to threaten the humans, since the next opportunity won't appear regardless of how long I wait...I see. This is annoying."

Estellar's mysterious words resounded in their minds.

"What the hell...is next?"

Kagami asked the question everyone had on their minds.

"Let me give you a few hints on how to beat the crap out of the guys who made this world. There are two ways. The first one...is to kill the Demon King."

After deliberating over whether to tell them or not, Estellar replied with a sigh, as if it couldn't have been helped. The only one who understood the hint was Kagami. The others simply looked like they wanted to inquire further.

Kagami had originally considered this issue. Even though Estellar had obtained the Demon King's vast pool of power, why did he not try to kill them? Didn't he have a separate goal of eliminating humans?

If the goal was to eliminate humans, weren't there more effective ways to invade? Why did he pretend to be hostile, as if he wanted to...spread it throughout the world? Why did he resort to taking Salumeria? Why were all of the Salumerian citizens allowed to run away without being intercepted and killed?

With normal invasions, Kagami had always felt as if there was an ulterior motive. However, with that answer, he came to understand Estellar's words. By making them feel threatened, wouldn't that lead to the rise of an existence capable of defeating the Demon King?

"Dismissal...!" (Kagami)

Due to his comprehension, Kagami declared that. He had always worried about following the world's system.

“Right?...That’s why it’s difficult. I have yet to find any records of this being done before now. However, it’s a different issue if you were aiming for that originally.”
(Estellar)

“I don’t understand what you’re trying to say at all, though?” (Kagami)

“Show me the item you will need to obtain to complete your goal. The other method.”
(Estellar)

“You mean...the 10,000 gold item?” (Kagami)

Estellar nodded to Kagami’s question. He couldn’t understand why Estellar let him know that. However, Kagami finally gave into the feeling that he was being asked for a favor. He couldn’t understand the reason even though Estellar had told him that while looking at him steadily.

“Who...are you? Are you not a subordinate of the Demon King?”(Kagami)

Estellar only muttered, “I was destined to be a subordinate by fate,” in reply before extending his arm and directing his palm towards the Demon King. The Demon King was wrapped in a violet light released from Estellar’s palm, and soon, his figure vanished, as if he had ceased to exist.

“Demon King-sama? You bastard...Estellar! Where did you take Demon King-sama!”
(Menou)

“Estellar! Return my father!” (Alice)

Menou and Alice yelled at Estellar while looking worried to death.

“I have collected Demon King-sama. If you want me to return him, show me how you will accomplish it...the other method. That’s right, the time limit is...one year. If you are still struggling by then, I will use Demon King-sama once again, and I will destroy humanity with all of my power.” (Estellar)

Estellar muttered, “I wonder which side will survive next time,” and then his body was wrapped in violet before his figure vanished, just like the Demon King.

Worried about the implication of killing the Demon King in a year, Kagami furrowed his brows and wore a baffled expression.

“Even though...I finally met father.” (Alice)

With half her body already sagging, Alice ended up collapsing and sat down while muttering that weakly.

“Please look....The Monsters are!” (Tina)

Tina was pointing at the Monster troop that was heading back towards the Demon King’s Castle, while completely ignoring Kagami’s group and abandoning the battle.

After they disappeared, Kagami’s group stood alone, already sick of everything in the Astro Wasteland. Although they had been able to protect Salumeria and confirm the safety of the Demon king, they all had a big lump in their chests from dissatisfaction.

Many of Estellar’s words were mysterious, and then there was the issue of defeating the Demon King and obtaining the 10,000 gold. It was like they hadn’t understood this world. They were left with negative feelings while worrying over that unsolvable problem.

“What will we do...now?” (Krul)

Krul suddenly raised the question while Kagami was gazing after the Monster troop that was disappearing over the horizon.

“What will you guys do?” (Kagami)

“I...” (Krul)

Krul considered the question seriously, even though Kagami had yet to look away from the Monsters. To be honest, she couldn’t decide what was right or wrong. Krul and Kagami shared the same dilemma. At least Alice had a parent and child relation to the Demon King, and that wouldn’t change.

The others had the same thought as well.

“I want to listen to your opinions, what do you plan on doing from here?” (Rex)

Although he had initially begun on a journey to defeat the Demon King, Rex was worried about whether he had decided to do that by his own will or by the will of the world.

Rex, who had been gazing into the distance with a lost look, asked Kagami.

When faced with that question, Kagami twisted his body left and right while groaning with a worried look as he pretended to think about it. Then, suddenly, as if he had thought of something, he snapped his fingers with a ‘pachin.’

“Alright, to start with, I’m going to open up a Casino!”

Is what he said.

“””””Hah?”””””

Everyone there exclaimed that with their heads inclined in reply to Kagami’s completely unexpected and baffling words.

